DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 343 968 UD 028 585

AUTHOR Rafferty, Yvonne
TITLE And Miles To Go... Barriers to Academic Achievement and Innovative Strategies for the Delivery of Educational Services to Homeless Children.
INSTITUTION Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., Long Island City.
SPONS AGENCY Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, New York, N.Y.; New York State Education Dept., Albany.; Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, Inc., New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE Nov 91
NOTE 203p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC09 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Access to Education; *Children; Compulsory Education; *Delivery Systems; *Disadvantaged Youth; Economically Disadvantaged; Educational Discrimination; Elementary Secondary Education; Equal Education; Federal Legislation; *Homeless People; Inner City; State Legislation; Urban Problems; Urban Schools; *Urban Youth
IDENTIFIERS *New York (New York)

ABSTRACT

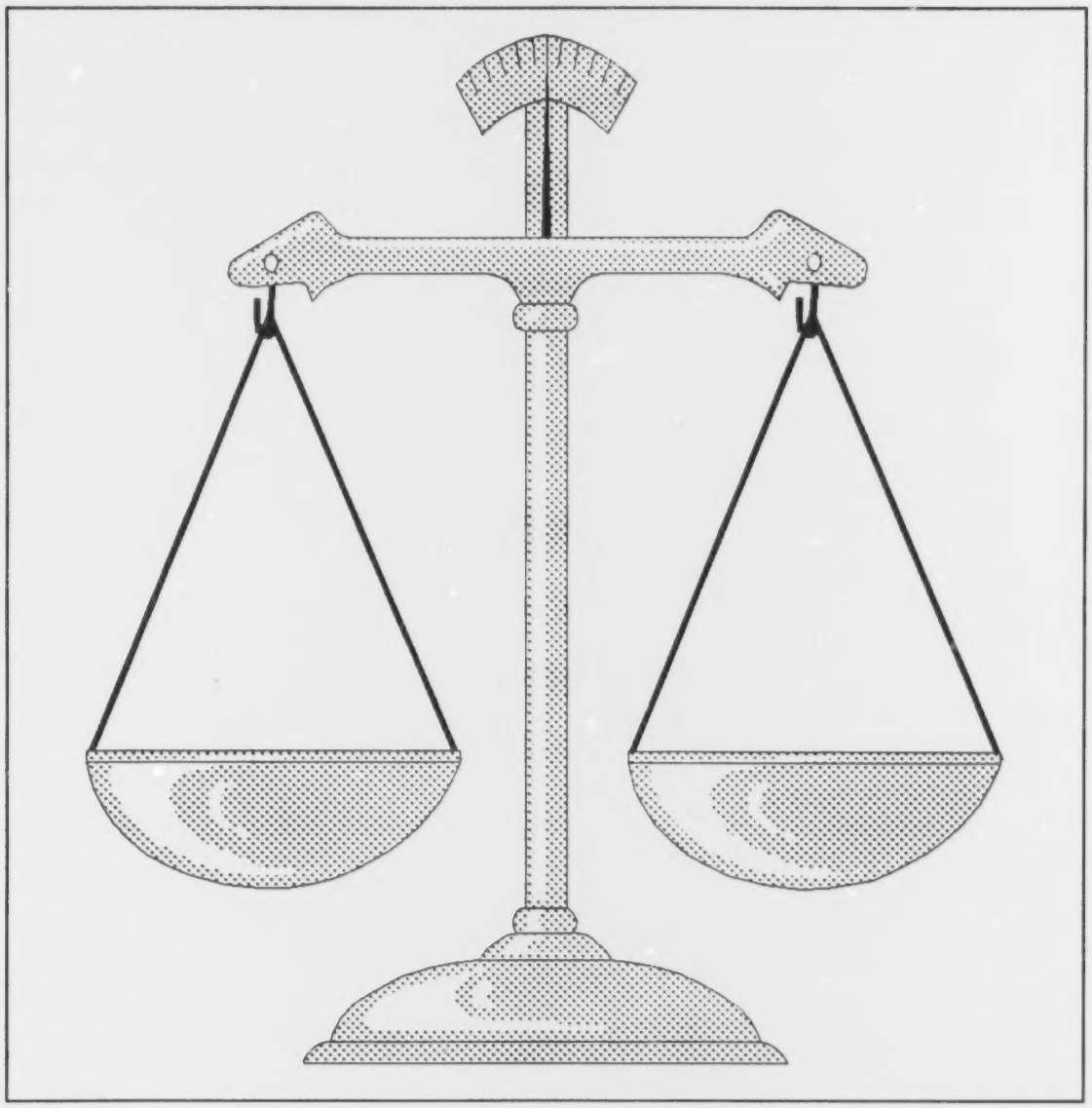
Focuses on the educational needs of homeless children in New York City, obstacles to obtaining schooling and available services, and innovative strategies for the delivery of educational services. Part 1 provides an overview of the educational needs of homeless children, including a summary of the research literature on educational problems that they confront; Federal, New York State, and New York City responses; and a critique of the extent to which these initiatives address students' needs and barriers to services. Part 2 focuses on field-based research to identify the obstacles to education confronting homeless children in New York City. Barriers were identified by 22 community school district coordinators for the education of homeless children and youth who participated in structured interviews. These coordinators were responsible for ensuring the education of about 2,991 student from 3,747 families residing in 56 emergency shelter facilities. Included are 26 major findings. The following findings are highlighted: (1) preschoolers are rarely placed in available programs; (2) kindergarten children are routinely denied access to schooling; (3) transfers of school records pose significant barriers; (4) there are no systematic attendance outreach efforts for homeless children; (5) homeless children are not being admitted to their zoned schools; and (6) dropout services are rarely provided to homeless dropouts. Included are 10 tables, 4 appendices containing reproductions of pertinent regulations and legislation, and 100 references. (JB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED343968

And miles to go...

Barriers to Academic Achievement and Innovative Strategies for the Delivery of Educational Services to Homeless Children



ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN OF NEW YORK, INC.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Y. Rafferty
Advocates for Children
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

November, 1991

Yvonne Rafferty, Ph.D.
Director of Research

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

UD 028 585

And miles to go...

BARRIERS TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

AND

INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR THE DELIVERY

OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

TO HOMELESS CHILDREN

Yvonne Rafferty, Ph.D.
Director of Research
Advocates for Children of New York, Inc.
24-16 Bridge Plaza South
Long Island City, New York 11101
Phone: (718) 729-8866

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was made possible by generous grants from the New York State Education Department (under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act), the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. We thank them for supporting our efforts to document the impact of homelessness on the ability to be educated, and to identify innovative strategies for the delivery of educational services. However, the views contained in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the funding sources.

Advocates for Children would also like to acknowledge those who made valuable contributions to this project, and without whose help this research could not have been completed. Special appreciation goes to Vincent Bogert, William Fitzhugh, Robert Froccaro, Edward Kissane, and Valerie Pekar for their valuable insights into the problems encountered by homeless children.

We especially thank each of the New York City Board of Education District Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth for responding to our lengthy structured interview, and for giving of their time and ideas to help make this report a reality.

Many other people, too numerous to mention individually, primarily from New York City emergency shelter facilities, domestic violence shelters, and public schools, also contributed to this report. To each of these individuals, for their invaluable participation and willingness to provide information, assistance, and advice, we express our gratitude. We also thank the New York City Board of Education for providing us with current data on the school attendance of homeless children in New York City.

Most importantly, thanks to the many homeless children and their families who spent time talking to us, in the hope that by sharing their experiences with us we would be able to make a difference in their lives.

For valuable help conceptualizing this project, and for proving constructive feedback and editorial assistance, we thank Norma Rollins. For their thoughtful and critical comments on an earlier version of this report, we thank Diana MTK Autin, Vincent Bogert, Sharon Hammer, Robert Hughes, Nancy Nevarez, and Valerie Pekar. For suggesting a most appropriate title for this report, we thank Janice Silber. For his diligence in typesetting the manuscript, we thank Gabriel Mack.

Advocates for Children of New York, Inc.
Board of Directors

Alan H. Levine, Esq.
President

Carol L. Ziegler, Esq.
Vice President

Robert Schwartz, Ph.D.
Treasurer

Marva A. Allen, Esq.
Secretary

Marilyn Braveman
Ursula Thomas Davis
Anne G. Feldman
Cecily Fox
Audrey Gartner
Marjorie Hendler, Ph.D.
Guillermo Linares
Deborah W. Meier
Edward Morgan
Jon Moscow
Pedro Pedraza, Jr.
Rhonda Carloss Smith
Minerva Warwin

Elizabeth C. Yeampierre, Esq.
Executive Director

FOREWORD

Public education is the legal right of all children in our nation. It is our legal responsibility to provide it. Advocates for Children of New York (AFC) was founded in 1970 to ensure equal educational opportunities, promote quality educational services, and overcome school failure for New York City's 1,000,000 public school students. AFC's mission is to represent students placed at highest risk of educational failure: those who suffer educational disadvantage because of racial discrimination, poverty, handicapping conditions, or inadequate academic preparation. The core of AFC's program is the provision of assistance to individual students and their families to obtain appropriate quality educational services. In addition, through our research and policy analysis, we examine local, state, and national issues and their impact on children attending New York City's public schools. AFC's program is carried out by a multiracial, bilingual staff of attorneys, lay advocates, parent organizers, researchers, and volunteers, all of whom provide individual advocacy, training, research, and community organizing.

AFC became concerned with the education of homeless children several years ago and has consistently worked to address the obstacles they confront in obtaining and maintaining access to a high quality free public education. In this report, Yvonne Rafferty, our Director of Research, describes the educational needs of these vulnerable students, the obstacles they confront accessing appropriate educational services, and offers some innovative strategies for the delivery of educational services. Our intention is to bring the educational needs of homeless children into focus, to describe how adequately current policies and programs serve them, and to suggest steps to improve their lives. The final step remains the responsibility of the New York State Education Department and the New York City Board of Education to implement these strategies to remove existing barriers, and ensure that homeless children are afforded a free and appropriate public education. We hope through this publication to foster new commitments to action.

Elizabeth C. Yeampierre, Esq.
Executive Director

"As I lay in bed crying myself to sleep in the Prince George Hotel, the largest hotel used to house homeless families in New York City, I could not bring myself to overcome the fear of what was happening to me. Over and over again I keep telling myself that I don't deserve this. I'm only 12 years old. I feel so alone....

They have no right to punish me for something I have no control over. I'm just a little boy, living in a hotel, petrified, wanting to know what's going to happen to me....

I am just like most other little boys. I like to play baseball, ride bikes, and go to the movies with my friends. It's strange, but I really like when the lights go off in the movies because them I'm no longer a homeless child. I'm just a person watching the movie like everyone else."

(Reproduced from the New York Times, September 30, 1990, p. E5).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Acknowledgements iii

Foreword v

Executive Summary ix

PART ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS, PROBLEMS, AND RIGHTS OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

1. **Introduction** 1

2. **Educational Problems Confronting Homeless Children** 7

   Access Barriers 8
   Irregular School Attendance 11
   Poor Academic Performance 14
   Conclusion 16

3. **The Educational Rights of Homeless Children and Youth** 19

   The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 19
   The McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments of 1990 20
   Critique of the Federal Response 26

4. **New York State's Compliance with the Federal Mandates** 31

   The Regulations of the Commissioner of Education 31
   The New York State Plan 38
   Conclusion 43

5. **A Profile of Homeless Children in New York City** 45

   School Attendance Rates 45
   The Role of the New York City Board of Education 50
   Conclusion 57

PART TWO

OBSTACLES TO ACCESSING EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES

6. **Overview of the Current Project** 59

   Research Goals 59
   Research Methods 61
   Presentation of the Research Findings 65

S

7. **Barriers to Timely School Placements** 67

8. **Barriers to Appropriate School Placements** 89

9. **Barriers to School Attendance and Academic Success** 101

10. **Support Services to Enhance School Attendance** 125

11. **Support Services to Prevent Academic Failure** 139

12. **Conclusion** 153

Barriers at the New York State Level 153
Barriers at the New York City Level 156
Future Directions 159

References 161

Appendices

A. The Stewart B. McKinney Assistance Amendments Act, Subtitle VII-B (Sections 721-722) as amended November 29, 1990.

B. New York State Commissioner's Regulation (Section 100.2(x) and (y) of Title 8, NYCRR), Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

C. New York City Chancellor's Regulation A-780.

D. New York State Education Department's Pamphlet entitled "Special Education for your Preschool Child."

Tables

1. Emergency Shelter Experiences of New York City Families
2. Estimates of School-Age Children who do not Regularly Attend School.
3. School Attendance Data.
4. Reasons why Homeless Children are not Attending School.
5. Educational Problems.
6. Holdover Rates.
7. Attendance Rates for Homeless Students in New York City by Grade Level.
8. A Profile of Homeless Families and Students in New York City.
9. Attendance Rates for Homeless Students within each Community School District.
10. Distribution of Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention Funds for Fiscal Year 1990-1991.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Homelessness affects the lives of families in many ways. In this report, Advocates for Children (AFC) focuses on the educational needs of homeless children, obstacles to obtaining schooling and available services, and innovative strategies for the delivery of educational services. Part I provides an overview of the educational needs of homeless children, including, a summary of the research literature on the educational problems that they confront; the Federal, New York State, and New York City response to problems and barriers; and a critique of the extent to which these initiatives address the identified needs and barriers to services.

In Part II, we focus on AFC's field-based research to identify the obstacles to education confronting homeless children in New York City (NYC). Barriers were identified by twenty-two Board of Education (BOE) community school district coordinators for educating homeless children and youth who participated in structured interviews conducted by AFC. At the time of our interviews, these coordinators were responsible for ensuring the education of approximately 2,991 students, from 3,747 families who were currently residing in 56 emergency shelter facilities. Every school district with at least 17 families sheltered within its boundaries was represented. We describe barriers to timely and appropriate school placement, school attendance, and academic success; the extent to which support services are available to address these barriers; and barriers to accessing available support services. We offer strategies that effectively address the obstacles to educational placement and support services identified by our research. Our key findings and a sample of the strategies that we offer to address each major finding are highlighted below.

PRESCHOOLERS ARE RARELY PLACED INTO AVAILABLE PROGRAMS

Homeless preschoolers are routinely excluded from early childhood programs

because of ineffective or nonexistent outreach by BOE personnel; inconsistent application and selection procedures that ignore the transiency associated with homelessness; and the inappropriate use of eligibility criteria to exclude homeless children from Head Start programs.

- o District coordinators must be made aware of McKinney Act mandates: If preschool services are available to permanently housed children in the district, homeless preschoolers are also eligible to receive these services.

- o District coordinators should be required to provide intake services for preschoolers who are eligible to attend district programs, and to place eligible children into available programs. Each community school district should reserve an appropriate proportion of preschool slots for homeless children.

- o The United States Department of Health and Human Services must be reminded that the McKinney Act mandates that any laws, practices, or policies that prevent homeless children from obtaining an education must be removed. Modifications such as waiving performance requirements regarding attendance and follow-up must be made so that Head Start programs can accommodate homeless preschoolers.

THERE ARE NO POLICIES OR PROCEDURES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF PRESCHOOLERS WITH HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS

Only two of the 22 districts have a policy and procedure to ensure that homeless preschoolers suspected of having handicapping conditions are evaluated and receive services.

- o The HRA should ensure that children with handicapping conditions (including preschoolers) are placed according to their educational needs. They should be prioritized for stable shelter placements in their former community so that educational disruption is minimized.

- o HRA should ensure that homeless preschoolers with suspected handicapping conditions are identified during the health screening, and referred to the school district CPSE and the relevant district coordinator.

- o Available handouts, such as the SED's pamphlet "Special Education for your Preschool Child," should be distributed to all homeless families.

- o BOE intake workers should be required to routinely ask parents if any of their preschool children have a physical or learning problem.

KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN ARE ROUTINELY DENIED ACCESS TO SCHOOLING

Many respondents indicated that kindergarten programs in their districts were full, and generally not available for homeless children. In other cases, parents are informed

that their only option is to place children in school far away from the shelter, without transportation.

- The Central Board must remind district and school personnel that it is illegal to deny children access to kindergarten.
- Kindergarten children should be placed in their zoned schools. If this is not possible, actual school bus transportation should be provided.

DELAYS IN THE TRANSFER OF SCHOOL RECORDS PREVENT STUDENTS FROM BEING PLACED IN APPROPRIATE CLASSROOM SETTINGS

Every district coordinator cited delays in the transfer of records as having a negative impact on their ability to place children according to their educational needs and legal entitlements. Delays are particularly acute for children who have been bounced between different shelters and schools. Without school records, children often do not receive the services to which they are entitled, including special education and bilingual services.

- As long as families are bounced from shelter to shelter and children must transfer from school to school, there is going to be a problem with the timely transfer of records. Therefore, the best strategy to eliminate this problem is for the HRA to stop bouncing families from one emergency shelter to another.
- District and school personnel should be informed that the McKinney Act mandates the timely transfer of academic and health records, and that barriers to meeting this mandate must be removed.
- Receiving schools should fax the request for records to former schools, and the sending school should fax the records back the same day. The district office should assist schools without fax machines.
- Access to computerized biofile information would substantially assist district personnel with proper placements, especially if they were kept accurate and up to date. On-line computer linkage should be provided to districts and schools.
- Until an adequate procedure is in place to ensure the timely transfer of school records, parents should be provided with a fact sheet of basic information (e.g. student identification number, test information, immunization data, and special needs).

TRANSFER OF SCHOOL RECORDS POSE ADDITIONAL BARRIERS FOR OUT-OF-STATE CHILDREN

Several coordinators identified the untimely transfer of academic and health records as a major obstacle to the appropriate placement of children who previously attended schools outside of NYC. Especially problematic is the transfer of records from Puerto Rico

and the West Indies.

- o Liaisons must be developed and communication established between coordinators for educating homeless children and youth in other states, and especially Puerto Rico.
- o Schools should be required to call each child's former school and get test scores and verification of immunization over the telephone, regardless of the distance involved.
- o Principals should be required to admit all homeless children to school, while proof of birth is being verified. According to New York State Education Law, Section 3212, 3218, principals may place children in school pending proof of age.

CHILDREN REQUIRING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES CONFRONT ADDITIONAL OBSTACLES ACCESSING APPROPRIATE SERVICES

Children requiring special education services often wait for extended periods of time in regular education classes, or at the shelter, until appropriate placements and transportation are arranged. District coordinators cited the untimely transfer of the child's individualized education plan (IEP), a lack of available program space, and delays in arranging transportation as reasons for improper interim placements.

- o Families with children in special education programs should receive stable emergency shelter placements in the same borough as their prior permanent home.
- o The Central Board must establish a system for coordination and communication between the Division of Special Education, CSE Placement Officers, District Administrators for Special Education, District Coordinators, and on-site family assistants.
- o CSEs must review and standardize transfer procedures to ensure that homeless children are transferred with minimum interruption of educational service. Records and other pertinent placement information should be faxed.
- o The Office of Pupil Transportation should be required to ensure that transportation is immediately arranged. In no case should transportation be denied, regardless of the distance or boroughs involved.
- o Under no circumstances should children be required to wait at the shelter until an appropriate placement is arranged.

ALTHOUGH ATTENDANCE IS A MAJOR PROBLEM FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN WITH HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS, THERE ARE NO SYSTEMATIC ATTENDANCE OUTREACH EFFORTS MADE

The Division of Special Education has its own attendance teachers who are required to follow-up on students with severe handicapping conditions who are not attending school. Only 6 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed reported that the attendance outreach

services for students in "Citywide" programs were adequate.

- The "Citywide" Division should be provided with an accurate list of district coordinators and family assistants assigned to each shelter, and their phone numbers. District coordinators should be involved in all follow-up services to truant students.

- The Central Board must bring all involved parties together to establish policies and procedures for truant homeless students in "Citywide" programs. The supervisor of attendance must become involved.

- Data on homeless students in "Citywide" programs should be shared with district coordinators and other interested parties.

- The Central Board must establish communication between the "Citywide" Division, "Citywide" principals, "Citywide" attendance teachers, and district coordinators.

HOMELESS STUDENTS ARE NOT BEING ADMITTED INTO THEIR ZONED SCHOOLS, PLACING AN ADDITIONAL BURDEN ON THE CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS

In most cases, homeless children are distributed among a variety of schools in the district. While overcrowding was the most frequently cited reason given for being unable to place homeless students in their zoned schools, some superintendents actually order district staff to distribute homeless children throughout district schools.

- Community school districts should be prohibited from using ad hoc arrangements when assigning children to district schools. Children should be placed in their zoned schools.

- Districts need to rezone if they feel that there is undue burden on select schools. When schools are overcrowded, they must be required to rezone.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE FALLING BETWEEN THE CRACKS DUE TO A LACK OF COORDINATION BETWEEN THE HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

According to district coordinators, high school students in most shelters are <u>not</u> being identified by the school system as being homeless; do not receive adequate intake services; encounter bureaucratic "red tape" when transferring into local schools; confront barriers such as residency requirements and transportation problems when continuing to attend current schools; and receive no follow-up services when attendance is poor.

- The Central Board must bring all involved parties together to establish liaisons, and facilitate coordination and communication between the High School Division, the Office of High Schools Admissions, each Superintendent's office, and each high school's attendance coordinator. The High School Division must be held accountable to ensure that policies are

enforced, and that no student is denied educational services because of residency requirements.

- The High School Division must appoint a coordinator of services and one person within each school superintendence (preferably the Supervisor of Attendance) to ensure that all homeless students are identified, provided with attendance monitoring, and receive outreach services when required. The excessive number of homeless high school students who are long term absentees must be addressed.

- An attendance coordinator must be designated in each high school who is responsible for monitoring the attendance of all homeless students in that school. District coordinators should be provided with this information.

- The Central Board and the HRA should work together to clarify ambiguities regarding the number of homeless high school students, and ensure that all students residing in emergency shelter facilities are identified.

SERVICES ARE RARELY PROVIDED TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH WHO HAVE DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL

Children who transfer from school to school fall behind academically and get discouraged. This places them at greater risk of dropping out. Yet, district coordinators indicated that few are targeted for intervention services. In addition, alternative school programs and programs for pregnant and parenting teens are often filled.

- Homeless children who have dropped out of school should be identified by the SED, in accordance with the McKinney Act.

- The High School Division should evaluate the reasons why homeless high school students are dropping out of school. Intervention programs should be developed to prevent others from dropping out, and return those who have already dropped out to school.

- Teenagers who are pregnant and/or parenting and attending school, should receive stable emergency shelter placements. The City of New York must increase day care options for teenage parents.

- The High School Division should disseminate information regarding programs that might be of interest to youth, including programs for pregnant teens, work-study programs, alternative school programs, and vocational programs.

CHILDREN IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTERS DO NOT RECEIVE THE SERVICES PROVIDED TO OTHER HOMELESS CHILDREN

Children in domestic violence shelters operated by HRA's Domestic Violence Unit are not considered homeless by the school system, regardless of whether or not they have a home of their own to which to return. Therefore, they receive none of the services available to homeless children in other emergency shelter facilities.

- o Children residing in domestic violence shelters are protected by the McKinney Act and ought not to be denied services, however complicated the provision of such services might be. Intake and other services must be provided to families in HRA's Domestic Violence Programs.

- o The Central Board must identify domestic violence shelters, and provide district coordinators with an accurate list of shelters, contact personnel, and phone numbers.

- o Special attention must be paid to the school records of homeless children in domestic violence shelters. At the time of enrollment, schools must determine who can pick up the child from school. Pupil personnel secretaries must inform domestic violence shelter directors when a violent parent tries to locate the family by requesting information on where copies of records have been sent.

CHILDREN SHELTERED IN NYC AND ATTENDING CITY SCHOOLS, AS A RESULT OF INSUFFICIENT EMERGENCY SPACE IN WESTCHESTER, DO NOT RECEIVE THE SERVICES PROVIDED TO OTHER HOMELESS CHILDREN IN THE SAME SCHOOLS

Although the BOE is responsible for the education of these students, southern Westchester BOCES has accepted responsibility to ensure that they are identified and enrolled in school. These children, however, are not brought to the attention of any representative of the BOE. They get none of the services provided to other homeless children in NYC.

- o The Central Board must establish communication with southern Westchester BOCES, and assume a leadership role in coordinating services to these students. District personnel and/or the High School Division must work with the appropriate schools to ensure that each child's educational needs are being met, and that attendance monitoring and other support services are provided.

TRANSPORTATION IS A BARRIER TO MAINTAINING CONTINUITY OF EDUCATION, ESPECIALLY FOR CHILDREN WHO DO NOT TRANSFER INTO LOCAL SCHOOLS

Despite litigation, transportation problems continue to keep children out of school. According to district coordinators, the Office of Pupil Transportation is not processing requests as expeditiously as necessary. In some cases, there is no process in place to ensure that each child and, where necessary, their parents, are provided with sufficient funds to travel to and from school until such time as passes become available. Without funds or passes, children must wait at the shelter until their pass arrives. In addition, some school districts do not inform parents that they are entitled to an increase in their public assistance

benefits if they must accompany their children to and from school. In other cases, income maintenance workers are simply refusing to honor these requests.

- The Office of Pupil Transportation must be reminded that homeless students are entitled to expedited processing of transportation requests, and that the McKinney Act mandates that transportation barriers must be removed.

- The Central Board must ensure that tokens are provided to all students, and their parents if necessary, until transportation passes are issued.

- BOE intake workers and HRA income maintenance workers must be informed of the transportation entitlements for parents who need to escort their children to and from school. A policy must be established whereby parents are not prevented from escorting their children, attending PTA meetings and other school functions because of a lack of transportation.

TRANSPORTATION IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BARRIER TO PARTICIPATION IN BEFORE AND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

When children attend schools that are not within walking distance to the shelter (usually a result of not being allowed to attend their zoned schools), participation in before and after-school programs is extremely difficult. This occurs primarily because school bus transportation is only provided at the beginning and end of the actual school day.

- In accordance with the McKinney Amendments of 1990, transportation and other barriers that prevent homeless students from participating in available before and after-school programs must be addressed and removed. When children attend schools that are not within walking distance to the shelter, actual bus transportation must be provided to enable them to participate in all available before and after-school programs.

MIDYEAR TRANSFERS INTO SCHOOLS PREVENT STUDENTS FROM ACCESSING AVAILABLE PROGRAMS BECAUSE THEY ARE FULL

Many programs are filled to capacity by mid September. Thus, homeless children, who routinely bounce from shelter to shelter and from school to school, are often prevented from accessing services that are available at the school. Ironically, some schools tell homeless students that they cannot participate in after-school programs because "they have a program at the shelter, and they must go there."

- In accordance with the McKinney Amendments of 1990, shelter bouncing and the resultant school bouncing that prevent children from accessing available programs must cease.

- Schools must be reminded that excluding homeless children from participating in available programs at the school is illegal. An appropriate proportion of slots within each program must be reserved for homeless children.

THERE ARE NO POLICIES TO ENSURE THAT HOMELESS STUDENTS ARE PLACED IN SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Placement in summer school programs to increase academic performance depends on standardized test scores. This makes accessing services more difficult for homeless students because they are less likely to have their records available, and are more likely to have missed being tested or having their scores reported. At the same time, they are at twice the risk of having to repeat a grade.

- Homeless students should be prioritized for summer school programs.

THE LACK OF SCHOOL CLOTHING AND SUPPLIES PREVENT HOMELESS CHILDREN FROM ATTENDING SCHOOL

The acquisition of school clothes and supplies can be a major task for homeless parents. Every district coordinator interviewed reported that homeless children often indicate that they fear their clothing is inadequate, and that a lack of adequate school clothes and supplies is a major barrier to school attendance and academic performance.

- Schools should develop clothing banks using Chapter 1 funds, State Compensatory Education funds, parent/teacher association funds, local community action programs, Salvation Army, church groups and other concerned agencies.
- Schools should distribute school supplies, including books, notebooks, and pencils to enable children to participate fully in school. Authorities should be careful to ensure that these supplies are similar to those of the other children to prevent accidentally stigmatizing homeless children.
- The Central Board should contact clothing manufacturers and ask them to donate clothing to homeless school-age children to enable them to attend school.
- The Central Board should contact book publishers and other suppliers of school supplies who may be willing to donate supplies.
- Schools should develop ways for students to earn additional supplies as awards for good academic work and regular school attendance.

HOMELESS STUDENTS SELDOM RECEIVE ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT SERVICES, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THEY ARE PRIORITIZED FOR PLACEMENT

Neither the Central Board nor the Community School District Coordinators were able to provide us with an accurate estimate of the proportion of homeless elementary and

junior high school students receiving attendance improvement/dropout improvement (AI/DP) services. Of the 22 district coordinators interviewed, 6 reported that none of the homeless elementary school-age students attending district schools were receiving AI/DP services; 3 estimated that services were provided to less than 20%; 2 estimated a range of 20% to 30%; 3 estimated a range of 40% to 50%; 4 estimated a range of 50% to 75%; and 4 were unable to provide us with any estimate at all.

- The BOE must program its database to provide information on the proportion of homeless students who receive AI/DP services.
- Monitoring reports on AI/DP programs should be made available to all interested parties in a timely manner.
- Prompt action must be taken to ensure that homeless students receive AI/DP services.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING SYSTEMS AND FOLLOW-UP SERVICES TO ENHANCE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ARE INADEQUATE

The system for monitoring the attendance of homeless students and providing follow-up services when truant students are identified is inadequate. Overall, 20 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed indicated that the current system is seriously flawed and needs to be made more useful. When children are not attending school in the district where their shelter is located, school attendance personnel are especially reluctant to follow-up.

- Monthly attendance summaries must be provided to district coordinators by the Central Board in a more timely and efficient manner. Information written into the prior monthly attendance report by district coordinators must be incorporated into the following month's printout.
- Children who manifest attendance problems must be brought to the attention of the attendance coordinator in their school district. Follow-up services must be provided as required.
- Attendance programs should offer recognition to students with good attendance as well as make provisions for students with poor attendance. Incentives should be provided to support student attendance.

BARRIERS TO PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION LIMITS ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Only rarely do schools provide outreach services to involve parents of homeless

students in the education of their children. Overall, 18 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed reported that the school system could do more to involve parents in their children's education.

- Schools must make every effort to involve and encourage parents to be active participants in their child's education. School staff should be prepared to welcome parents into the school and have personal contact with them before problems arise. They should also collaborate with parents to enhance students' school attendance and academic performance. At all times, staff must be sensitive to the circumstances of the parent.

- School districts should design a parent involvement program around the needs of the family. Workshops should be provided on topics identified by parents. School districts must be careful to include bilingual parents. Information must be available in languages other than English.

- The SED should develop a series of posters and brochures for distribution and posting in shelters, income maintenance centers, and emergency assistance units outlining the educational rights of homeless children (e.g., children and youth do not have to have a permanent address to be enrolled in school; children have the right to continue attending their current school or transfer into local schools; transportation; information on how to obtain immunizations and birth certificates). This information should be disseminated in languages other than English.

- School districts should initiate a series of meetings with homeless parents to discuss the educational rights of their children, the education system in general, special education, and how to advocate for educational services. Available pamphlets should be distributed.

EDUCATOR INSENSITIVITY IS A MAJOR BARRIER TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Without an awareness and understanding of the physical deprivations and emotional devastation associated with homelessness, as well as sensitivity to the needs of homeless children, school personnel may unintentionally add to the trauma experienced by homeless children. Sixteen of the 22 district coordinators interviewed identified the lack of sensitivity from some school personnel as a major contributor to the negative impact that homelessness is having on children. The Central Board should take a leadership role in providing the necessary staff development.

- Staff development should be provided to all school personnel who come in contact with homeless children. Staff development should have three major functions: increasing awareness of the issues surrounding homelessness; improving staff sensitivity to homeless students; and increasing their knowledge of the educational rights of homeless children and youth.

- Increased awareness of the issues surrounding homelessness could be accomplished by providing staff with a series of training programs which includes basic information about where homeless children are living, the conditions under which they are living, the impact

of homelessness, and the effects of mobility and homelessness on education.

- o Improved sensitivity could be accomplished through in-service training sessions, which include role-playing so that staff can understand the impact of mobility, and develop strategies for working with students and their families as individuals, without stereotypes. A videotape program with associated staff development materials, such as No Time to Lose, distributed by the New York State Department of Social Services, should be used as a vehicle for developing staff's understanding of issues surrounding homelessness. Available literature on homeless students, and identified in this report, should be discussed and disseminated to all school staff.

- o Increased knowledge of the educational rights of homeless children and youth could be accomplished by providing all school district personnel with a copy of the McKinney Amendments of 1990. Trainings should be provided on the educational rights of all homeless children and youth.

- o The SED should serve as an information clearinghouse in order to increase educators' awareness of, and sensitivity to, the issues surrounding homelessness and the effects homelessness has on children and youth. Pamphlets should be printed and distributed that focus on pertinent issues and target excellent practices (e.g., nutritional needs, primary health and mental health care, importance of early intervention and kindergarten, etc.).

- o The Central Board should disseminate information on successful practices and encourage the adoption of promising and innovative education techniques by community school districts. Community school districts with exemplary programs should be asked to facilitate training programs for other community school districts.

SUPPORT SERVICES AT THE SHELTER SITE AND IN THE COMMUNITY ARE RARE

While after-school programs at the shelter site could provide homeless children with something to do at the end of the school day, they are rarely available. Of the 56 emergency shelters within the jurisdiction of the district coordinators interviewed, only 11 had any type of after-school program.

For the most part, community-based programs either do not exist, or district coordinators are unaware of their existence. Only 8 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed were aware of the existence of any community-based services within their school districts. Even when programs are available, homeless children are often unable to avail of them because they are full, are available only for children of a certain sex and/or age, or are too far away and transportation is not provided.

- o Homework help and other after-school services should be provided at each emergency shelter facility, and made available to the vast majority of homeless children who do not have after-school programs at their schools. District coordinators should develop a shelter-based tutor volunteer network.

- School and district personnel should link with community-based organizations and plan collaboratively to deliver a broader range of services from school buildings. Particular emphasis should be placed on preparing school and CBO staff to work together effectively. Pitfalls and successful strategies should be identified and disseminated by the Central Board to district and school staff and to CBO personnel who are planning to work together.

THE LACK OF INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION IS AN OBSTACLE TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Significant barriers to academic success include, disruptive and unstable shelter placements; inadequate conditions in emergency shelter facilities; disruptions in educational services resulting from multiple moves between schools; health problems; and family stress. Overcoming these barriers requires coordination, cooperation, and collaboration between the various agencies who work with homeless families.

- The SED should strengthen collaboration between involved state and city agencies, school districts, community agencies, advocacy groups, and shelter providers to ensure that homeless children have the opportunity to remain in one school during the academic year; receive all of the services to which they are entitled; and that school transfers cause the least amount of disruption to the child.

- The SED should hold inservice workshops for shelter personnel and social service providers regarding the educational rights of homeless children, the Department's policies and procedures relating to special education and Chapter 1 services, student records, transportation, and other pertinent education issues.

- The SED should create a Directory of Services which contains contact persons for each school district, shelter, social service agencies, and pertinent community-based agencies. This directory should be disseminated to all agencies working with homeless families.

- The SED should explore existing collaborations between schools, shelters and social service agencies, and disseminate this information to other schools, shelters and social service agencies. A newsletter should be issued on a regular basis and disseminated to all schools and agencies working with homeless families to keep them informed of current issues and provide some useful strategies for problematic issues.

- School staff should provide shelter directors with regular information on school events and programs, problems, and concerns. Schools should discuss their homework policies with each shelter director and ask them to set aside quiet areas where students can study.

- The HRA must keep the BOE informed of all shelter and hotel openings. The BOE should provide district coordinators with this information in a timely manner.

THERE IS NO SYSTEM IN PLACE TO FACILITATE CONTINUITY OF EDUCATION WHEN CHILDREN ARE RELOCATED INTO PERMANENT HOUSING

When homeless families with children relocate into permanent housing they again experience disruption in their lives. Most are moved to permanent housing in a borough

different from the location of their emergency shelter facility, and often different from their prior permanent home. Children need to be enrolled in new schools, transportation to these schools must be arranged, and school records need to be transferred.

- o BOE representatives should meet with families who are relocating into permanent housing prior to their move to arrange for appropriate school placements and transportation.

- o District coordinators should be informed of the arrival of formerly homeless students into their districts. Attendance monitoring and follow-up services should be provided to relocated students for twelve months.

THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE UNIT AT THE CENTRAL BOARD MUST IMPROVE ITS DELIVERY OF NECESSARY SUPPORT SERVICES

Overall, 16 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed were not satisfied with the assistance provided by the Central Board. Most criticisms focused on inaccurate and untimely attendance reports, the poor quality of technical assistance provided, and the lack of a process for the sharing of pertinent information and addressing staff development needs.

- o The Central Board should establish a network of experts, including providers, educators, and advocates, who are knowledgeable regarding the educational needs of homeless children, and services that are available to address these needs. Training sessions, planned and executed by expert teams, including providers, educators and advocates, should be conducted on a regular basis.

- o Staff development should be a major part of the technical assistance provided by the Central Board. They should take a leadership role in implementing strategies (provided in the report) pertaining to staff sensitivity. Meetings with district coordinators should be geared to providing useful information on issues identified by them. Suggestions should be offered to districts related to how they might use and coordinate resources to best provide appropriate education to homeless children.

- o The Central Board must provide district coordinators, family assistants, the High School Division, and the Division of Special Education with the exact requirements set forth in the McKinney Amendments of 1990 in easy to understand language. In this way, each responsible party will be fully informed as to his/her specific duties under federal law.

- o The Central Board must update Chancellor's Regulation A-780, students in temporary housing, and provide policies and procedures to bring the City into full compliance with the McKinney Amendments of 1990.

NO GUIDELINES OR ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES ARE IN PLACE TO ENSURE THAT PROGRAM FUNDS ARE WISELY USED

Most districts were unable to provide us with an accurate breakdown of the funding

they received for on-site and school-based services. Moreover, the Central Board was also unable to provide us with accurate accounts of the final allocations. Other unanswered questions include: How did the Central Board use its $630,000 allocation for administration of the Program? What was the High School Program that was awarded $310,000? What did the $120,000 evaluation of the program find? Can we expect this report to be issued soon? Where is the overdue 1990 evaluation report? Clearly, discussion of the distribution of funds is crucial to determining the best use of scarce resources in times of fiscal constraint. In addition, while most districts tried to be innovative and provide as many services as possible, some districts did not effectively use their funds.

- The Central Board must establish guidelines on how funding is to be used. Funding should be targeted to specific services. Supplemental funds for direct services should not be used to fund the administrative responsibilities of either the schools or the districts.

- Programs must be monitored by the Central Board, and districts should be held accountable for their use of program funds. Promising and innovative techniques should be encouraged. Successful models of service delivery should be identified and replicated.

- In accordance with the McKinney Act, the SED should monitor local education agencies responsible for carrying out the program, and correct deficiencies identified through monitoring or evaluation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

By the end of the 1980's, hundreds upon hundreds of financial institutions were insolvent. As one of its first actions, in February 1989, the Bush Administration recognizing that the industry insolvency totalled at least $90 billion, proposed a comprehensive plan to pay the accumulated costs and prevent such losses in the future. At about the same time, thousands upon thousands of families and children were without homes. In fact, more American families were homeless during the 1980's than at any time since the Great Depression -- "a decade of national shame" according to the National Coalition for the Homeless (1989b). In contrast to the bailout of the savings and loans associations, however, no comprehensive plan has been proposed to provide homeless families with affordable permanent housing. Nor is there a plan to prevent additional families from losing their homes.

The Housing and Community Development Act of 1937 and the National Housing Act of 1949 established the provision of affordable, decent, safe and sanitary housing for every American family in the United States as a national goal (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 1988). This goal, however, is far from being realized. In fact, the federal government's level of commitment is diminishing: its appropriations for assisted housing decreased during the 1980's from $30.1 billion in 1981 to $7.9 billion in 1990 (City of New York, 1990). New York State Governor, Mario Cuomo, who views the issue in terms of "values, of priorities, and of commitment" points out that the scraps that were left behind did not go to providing affordable housing, and instead were stolen in the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) scandal (Cuomo, 1987).

The rise in family homelessness is generally attributed to macro social and economic

factors (McChesney, 1990). Some lost their permanent housing as a result of fires or vacate orders due to dangerous housing conditions. Without the assistance of counsel, some were improperly evicted. Some lost their jobs, had their public assistance benefits erroneously terminated, or found their shelter allowance inadequate to pay skyrocketing rents. Others have never had homes of their own, but instead had been living "doubled-up" with relatives or friends. Others are victims of domestic violence (Childrens Defense Fund, 1990; National Coalition for the Homeless, 1987b; 1989b).

Nobody knows for sure how many children and youth are homeless, either living with their families or on their own, since most estimates are based on different assumptions and methods. For example, the U.S. General Accounting Office (1989) estimates that on any given night there are about 68,000 homeless children age 16 and younger. The Institute of Medicine (1988) estimates that 100,000 children go to sleep homeless every night. The U.S. Department of Education (1989) reports that there are 220,000 homeless school-age children (age 5 to 18).[1] The National Coalition for the Homeless (1987a) estimates that there are between 500,000 and 750,000 school-age homeless children nationwide. These estimates do not include homeless runaway children and youths (cf. Robertson, 1991). Whatever the figure, the number of homeless children nationwide has reached alarming proportions (Mihaly, 1991), and point to a national disgrace (Rossi, 1990).

Research on the impact of homelessness on children (generally identified as those in emergency shelter facilities with their families) indicates that they confront serious threats to their well-being. The fact that so many are affected by health problems, developmental delays, psychological problems, and academic underachievement is not

[1] The three municipalities reporting the greatest number of homeless children and youth are Los Angeles (12,250), New York City (10,169), and Chicago (10,000).

inconsequential: all of these outcomes of homelessness have profound and lasting effects on children's life chances (cf. Molnar, Rath, & Klein, 1991; Molnar & Rubin, 1991; Rafferty, 1990; 1991; Rafferty & Rollins, 1989; Rafferty & Shinn, 1991). There are several reasons why these conditions appear to be quite prevalent among our nation's children without homes. Rafferty & Shinn (1991) focus on hazardous emergency shelter conditions, instability in shelter placements, inadequate services, and difficulties in accessing services that are available.

THE FEDERAL RESPONSE TO FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

In response to the growing crisis of homelessness, the 99th Congress responded with legislation in late 1986. This legislation, however, may be described as "emergency" in nature -- largely because homelessness was then seen as a temporary crisis. Two significant legislative measures were enacted. The Homeless Eligibility Clarification Act amended existing federal antipoverty programs to require access by the homeless poor. Programs affected include Food Stamps, Medicaid, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Supplemental Security Income, and the Job Training Partnership Act (P.L.99-198 and P.L.99-570). In addition, two programs were created, at $10 and $5 million, respectively, to provide grants to shelters for capital costs and to establish demonstration transitional housing programs (Practising Law Institute, 1988).

THE STEWART B. McKINNEY HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT

In the Spring of 1987, the 100th Congress recognized homelessness as a national problem and passed landmark legislation to aid the homeless. The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (P.L.100-77) reluctantly signed into law by President Reagan on July 22, 1987, authorized a range of programs to provide urgently needed assistance to improve the lives of homeless individuals and families. Preexisting programs were augmented by the new law. New programs were also created to provide health care,

emergency food and shelter, mental health services, alcohol and drug abuse treatment, transitional housing, education, and job training (Interagency Council on the Homeless, 1989; U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1988). The McKinney Act was never intended to be comprehensive legislation. Originally introduced as the Urgent Relief for the Homeless Act, it focuses on short-term solutions to alleviate immediate problems (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 1991).

Congress authorized just over $1 billion under the McKinney Act for fiscal years 1987 and 1988, but the same Congress that promised relief broke its word to the homeless: much less was appropriated. For FY87, out of $430 million authorized, $350 million was appropriated. For FY88, out of $615 million authorized, only $360 million was appropriated. In addition, some federal agencies ignored the deadlines set by Congress to ensure the expeditious distribution of emergency funds (Practising Law Institute, 1988). The 101st Congress reauthorized the McKinney Act for fiscal years 1989 and 1990, adding programs for homeless veterans and homeless families who receive AFDC benefits. Once again, significantly lower amounts were appropriated than previously authorized (FY89: $717 vs. $700; FY90: $736 vs. $594).

THE McKINNEY AMENDMENTS OF 1990

The Stewart B. McKinney Act was reauthorized and amended by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments Act of 1990 (P.L.101-645). This amendment included modest increases in authorization levels and some redefinition and expansion of services, particularly in terms of mental health programs and the education of homeless children. The McKinney Amendments also authorized funding for three new important programs to meet the needs of homeless children: homelessness prevention; health services; and child welfare programs. The Homelessness Prevention Program established: (a) Family Support Centers at or near governmentally subsidized housing to provide neighborhood-

based comprehensive support services to prevent homelessness; and (b) Gateway Projects to increase self-sufficiency among young families residing in public housing. The Pediatric Health Services Program would increase access to health and social services through the use of mobile clinics. Child Welfare programs would prevent child abuse and neglect, and thwart the inappropriate placement of children into foster care due to homelessness and other housing crisis. Unfortunately, no FY91 appropriations were made for these new programs, nor did the Bush Administration request FY92 funding for any of these programs (cf. National Coalition for the Homeless, 1991; Wasem, 1991).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, little has been done on the federal level to address the fundamental causes of homelessness -- increasing poverty, lack of accordable housing, and a deficit of supportive services. National policy must focus on rehousing those who are currently homeless, as well as on developing strategies to prevent new homelessness (cf. Blasi, 1990; Kiesler, 1991; National Alliance to End Homelessness, 1988; Rossi, 1990). Expanded legislation and the provision of McKinney funds have facilitated whatever limited progress has been made in providing emergency aid to homeless families. However, while the McKinney Act was developed as an emergency response to homelessness, it is now being implemented as the long term solution. Beyond all else, homeless children need homes. In the interim, they need adequate and stable emergency shelter, adequate food and nutrition, access to preventive and curative health and mental health services, early intervention programs to prevent the onset of developmental delays, and an opportunity to be educated. National policy must focus on firmly establishing the legal right to adequate and stable emergency shelter, and ensuring that McKinney program funding levels are sufficient to meet the needs of the homeless. In addition, resources and supports must be made available to help resolve other problems that may contribute to or be exacerbated

by extreme poverty and homelessness (cf. National Alliance to End Homelessness, 1988; National Coalition for the Homeless, 1989a; Partnership for the Homeless, 1989; U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1988; 1989).

In the long run, the social costs of producing a lost generation of children -- which will include increased costs for criminal and juvenile justice, medical care, and special education programs -- are likely to substantially exceed the costs of providing sufficient permanent housing to end the crisis of homelessness. While the societal costs of supporting underemployed, indigent young adults who were once homeless will be counted in the billions, the human costs will be much more tragic. Our cities and our nation must develop an appropriate and effective response.

CHAPTER TWO

EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS CONFRONTING HOMELESS CHILDREN

The trauma accompanying the loss of one's home is devastating for children. This trauma is often compounded by entry into an inadequate and unstable emergency shelter system, and the dislocation from community, neighbors, services, friends, and schools. As shown in Table 1, 71% of 244 homeless families requesting emergency shelter in New York City were actually placed in a different borough from their prior permanent home; 66% had been placed in two or more facilities; and 29% had been bounced between four and eleven different shelters (Rafferty & Rollins, 1989). In every one of these families, there was at least one school-age child making these repeated and frequent moves.

TABLE 1

EMERGENCY SHELTER EXPERIENCES OF NEW YORK CITY FAMILIES

	Proportion	Sample Size
Different Borough:	71%	244[1]
Two or More Facilities:	66%	277
4 - 11 Facilities:	29%	277

Source: Learning in Limbo (1989, p.63). [1] This question did not apply to 33 families who had previously lived outside of New York City.

School is especially important for homeless children because of the very tumultuous nature of their existence, and the potential of the educational system to offer the stability, skills, and supports they so desperately need. School, in fact, may be the only source of stability in the life of a homeless child (National Coalition for the Homeless, 1987a). Indeed, when asked "How important is school and education for you," 92% of 159 homeless students in Minneapolis shelters rated school as very important to them (Masten, 1990).

Homeless children want to come to school more often than their permanently housed peers (Horowitz, Springer, & Kose, 1988). Yet, they typically confront greater obstacles in their attempts to obtain and maintain access to the nation's public schools and to services and programs available within the school setting (Center for Law and Education, 1987; National Coalition for the Homeless, 1987c; Rafferty & Rollins, 1989). In this chapter, we describe several critical obstacles identified in the research literature that impede homeless children from accessing appropriate educational services. We then discuss two major issues affecting the educational success of homeless children once they are enrolled in school: irregular school attendance, and poor academic performance.

> "***Homeless children have the same needs as other children. They need compassion and acceptance. They need to feel that they belong and that they have a place in their community and school. And they need a good education so that they can reach their potential. Unlike children who have a home, however, homeless children must overcome many barriers in obtaining an education. They change schools frequently, and they face difficulties in transferring between schools and districts, meeting residency requirements, obtaining transportation to and from school, and finding a quiet place to study. Their nutrition and health care are inadequate, and they do not have access to facilities for showering and washing clothes***" (California State Department of Education, 1989, p.v).

ACCESS BARRIERS

Homeless children are often unable to enroll in school (or are significantly delayed in doing so) because of local enrollment requirements and other bureaucratic "red tape." Particularly detrimental are residency requirements, guardianship requirements, inability to obtain school records, transportation problems, and obtaining comparable services to those available to nonhomeless children.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

School attendance laws generally require that students attending local public schools be "residents" of the local school district. In many cases, school districts have interpreted such rules to require that children maintain a permanent address within the district.

Homeless children, by definition unable to meet this requirement, have been barred from their school district of origin and, at the same time, barred from the school district where their temporary accommodation is located. In some cases, homeless children are forced to remain out of school while their residency status is being disputed. Despite legislation enacted in 1987 (discussed later) to remove this well known barrier to education, the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (1990a) reveals that 60% of the 20 states surveyed report that residency requirements continue to be imposed in a manner that excludes homeless children.

GUARDIANSHIP REQUIREMENTS

To spare their children from the trauma associated with homelessness, some parents place their children temporarily with relatives or friends while they are homeless. However, some school districts prohibit children from enrolling in local schools if they are living with someone other than their parent or legal guardian. Consequently, homeless children have been barred from attending school in the district in which their caretakers lived. In extreme cases, parents have felt compelled to give up legal custody of their children in order that they may be allowed to attend school. According to the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (1990a), 40% of the states in their survey reported that guardianship requirements continue to be imposed in a manner that excludes homeless children.

DELAYS IN THE TRANSMISSION OF SCHOOL RECORDS

School records are often burdensome and difficult to obtain and maintain, and in turn, result in needless and educationally damaging delays for homeless children. According to the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (1990a), 70% of the states in their survey reported that difficulties in records transfer for homeless children continue to keep homeless children from attending schools. For students who are forced

to change schools frequently as a result of being bounced from one shelter to another, the process is even more discouraging (Rafferty & Rollins, 1989). In some situations, children may be moved again before their documents are ever received, thus, requiring the cycle to begin again with requests for records from a different school. When this occurs, school records are often lost in the shuffle. In some states, documentation of immunization, and the presentation of birth certificates -- copies of which cost between $8 and $10 each -- are required before children are allowed to enroll in school. Thus, enrollment is often delayed while children are either immunized or get appropriate documentation. In some cases, children are being kept out of school because they cannot afford the fees involved.

TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS

Children living in emergency shelters, or on the streets, may be unable to obtain transportation to school. Especially in rural areas, public transportation is simply not available. However, even when public transportation is available, parents may not have the necessary funds to access such services. Transportation issues are particularly problematic for children who wish to continue attending their current school while they are homeless. In some cases, disputes over who is responsible for providing transportation costs have resulted in homeless children being kept out of school. When the U.S. Department of Education (1990) asked each state to report the reasons why homeless children were not attending school in their state, transportation was the most frequently reason cited: 28 states reported it as a major barrier. Correspondingly, the National Law Center for Homelessness and Poverty (1990b) identified transportation as the primary barrier to access for homeless children in the District of Columbia to school. In addition, transportation was identified as the greatest barrier to educating homeless children upstate New York -- despite existing legislation in New York State mandating the Department of Social Services (DSS) to provide transportation (Santini, 1991). The author's observation that neither DSS

not school staff appeared to be familiar with existing mandates is consistent with earlier findings reported for New York City (Rafferty & Rollins, 1989).

COMPARABLE SERVICES

Some homeless children require special education, compensatory education, services for limited English proficient students, or programs for the gifted or talented. In some cases, these educational needs are identified and services provided prior to the loss of housing. In other cases, the need is identified while they are homeless. In both cases, delayed testing and difficulty finding placement in the most appropriate educational environment have resulted in homeless children being excluded from school. In addition, homeless children are likely to lose educational services with the onset of homelessness: of 97 children who were receiving remedial assistance, bilingual services, or gifted and talented programs in New York City prior to the loss of their permanent housing, only 54% continued to receive them while homeless (Rafferty & Rollins, 1989). Finally, the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (1990a), reports that 55% of the states in their survey indicated that homeless children are being denied access to "comparable services" -- including school meals and special education programs.

IRREGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

As shown in Table 2, government estimates of the number of homeless school-age children who do not regularly attend school range from 15% (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1989) to 30% (U.S. Department of Education, 1989).[2] In contrast, the National Coalition for the Homeless (1987a), estimates that 57% of homeless school-age children do not attend school regularly.

---

[2] These figures are derived from different methodologies for counting homeless children and youth. They also exclude data on areas that were unable to provide this information to the U.S. Department of Education (Alabama, the District of Columbia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New York, and the Virgin Islands).

TABLE 2
NON-ATTENDANCE RATES

SOURCE	RATE
U.S. General Accounting Office, (1989)	15%
U.S. Department of Education, (1989)	30%
The National Coalition for the Homeless, (1987)	57%

Two additional studies have evaluated the school attendance of homeless children. As shown in Table 3, 78 homeless students in Los Angeles (Wood, Hayashi, Schlossman, & Valdez, 1989) missed more days in the prior three months than did 90 poor housed children (8-9 vs. 5-6); and were more likely to have missed more than one week of school (42% vs. 22%). For housed children, the primary reason for absence was illness; for homeless children, it was family transience. In AfC's study of 6,142 homeless students in New York City (Rafferty & Rollins, 1989), homeless high school students had the poorest rate of attendance when compared with the overall citywide attendance rates (51% vs. 84%), followed by junior high school students (64% vs. 86%), and children in elementary schools (74% vs. 89%). The rates are even lower for students placed in special education programs (e.g. 60% for 124 students with severe handicapping conditions).

TABLE 3
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE DATA

	HOMELESS STUDENTS	COMPARISON GROUP
Los Angeles	N = 78	N = 90
Average number of days missed in 3 months	8-9	5-6
Missed more than one week of school	42%	22%
Primary reason for days missed	Transience	Illness
New York City	N=6,142[1]	N=940,000[2]
Rate of Attendance - High School Students	51%	84%
Rate of Attendance - Junior High Students	64%	86%
Rate of Attendance - Elementary Students	74%	89%

[1] Excludes 118 students missing a grade code designation, and 173 students enrolled in Special Education Programs. [2] Approximately
L.A:Wood, Hayashi, Schlossman, & Valdez, 1989/NYC:Rafferty & Rollins, 1989

Each year, State Education Departments in the United States are asked to report to Congress the reasons why homeless children and youth in their states are not attending school. The most frequently reasons given in both 1989 and 1990 are presented in Table 4 (U.S. Department of Education, 1989; 1990). These findings suggest that factors associated with homelessness, and the lack of supplementary support services to homeless children and their families, make it especially difficult for homeless children to attend school regularly.

TABLE 4
REASONS WHY HOMELESS CHILDREN ARE NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL

Lack of transportation;

Shelter stays are too short to make enrollment worthwhile;

Parents preoccupied with finding food, shelter, and employment;

Children are discouraged by frequent school changes and the condition of homelessness;

Families in crisis lack motivation to send children to school;

Behavior problems or drug use by youth;

Lack of resources for school supplies and clothing;

Lack of school records -- academic, health, and immunization;

Concern that abusive parent will locate and harm child;

Delays in transferring records;

Lack of health and mental health care;

Residence and guardianship requirements;

Lack of information on school requirements and location;

Lack of day care for young siblings and teen parents; and

Children working.

(U.S. Department of Education, 1989; 1990).

POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Some of the difficulties confronting homeless children are exemplified by the Texas State Department of Education (1989):

> "*Homeless children suffer the loss associated with separation from their home, furniture, belongings, and pets; the uncertainty of when they will eat their next meal and where they will sleep during the night; the fear of who might hurt them or their family members as they live in strange and frequently violent environments; the embarrassment of being noticeably poor; and the frustration of not being able to do anything to alleviate their (or their family's) suffering. To assume that a child could push all of such suffering aside to adequately focus on academic tasks, may in many cases be unrealistic*" (p. 13).

Given the environmental, cultural and educational deprivations and disruptions associated with homelessness, it is not surprising to find that they are more likely to score poorly on standardized reading and mathematics tests, and are often required to repeat a grade. To examine these issues, AFC conducted a large research project involving 9,659 homeless students identified by the BOE between September, 1987 and May, 1988 (Rafferty & Rollins, 1989).

READING ACHIEVEMENT

As shown in Table 5, only 42% of the 3,805 homeless children in grades 3 through 10 who took the Degrees of Reading Power test in the spring of 1988 scored at or above grade level, compared with 68% of all NYC students taking the same test. Findings in the three community school districts that served the greatest numbers of homeless children (45% of the total) were consistent. The percentages of homeless children scoring at or above grade level in districts 1, 2, and 15 were 36%, 40%, and 41%, compared with 57%, 74%, and 68% for <u>all</u> district children. Further, of the 73 schools comprising these three school districts, only one school had a lower proportion of students reading at grade level than the overall proportion for homeless children attending schools in that district.

TABLE 5

EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

VARIABLE	N	HOMELESS	CITYWIDE
Reading at/above Grade Level	3,805[1]	42%	68%
Mathematics at/above Grade Level	4,203[2]	28%	57%
Holdover Rate	390	15%	7%

[1] Scores were not available for an additional 1,034 students who were either not tested or did not have their scores listed.[2] Scores were not available for an additional 971 students. Source: Learning in Limbo (1989, p.83,85,86)

MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT

Even more startling were the findings for the 4,203 students who took the Metropolitan Achievement test to assess achievement in mathematics. Overall, 28% of the 4,203 homeless children in grades 2 through 8 who took this test scored at or above grade level, compared with 57% citywide. Results were consistent in the three districts with the most homeless children (22%, 24%, and 23% vs. 48%, 70%, and 60%).

Only one other study has assessed academic performance among homeless children: Bassuk and Rosenberg, (1988) found that 43% of 50 homeless school-age children in Massachusetts were reported by their mothers as "failing or performing below average work," compared with 23% of a comparison group of 34 permanently housed peers.

HOLDOVER RATES

Not surprisingly, AFC found that homeless students were being held over at more than twice the rate of NYC students in general. Overall, 15% of the 390 students in our field-based study were currently repeating a prior grade. In contrast, the holdover rate for NYC students at the end of the 1987-1988 school year was 7%.

Other research on holdover rates of homeless students is consistent with AFC's

findings. As shown in Table 6, 38% of 159 homeless students (ages 8-17) in Minneapolis had repeated a grade, compared with 24% of 62 housed children (Masten, 1990); 30% of a Los Angeles sample of 78 homeless children had repeated a grade, compared with 18% of 90 housed children (Wood, Valdez, Hayashi, & Shen, 1990); and 35% of 43 homeless students in Philadelphia had repeated a grade, compared with 32% of 25 housed children (Rescorla, Parker, & Stolley, 1991). Other studies without comparison groups also have found high holdover rates among homeless children: 43% of 50 children in Massachusetts (Bassuk & Rubin, 1987); 50% of children in 53 homeless families in New York (Dumpson & Dinkins, 1987); and 30% of children whose families sought assistance from Travelers Aid (Maza & Hall, 1988).

TABLE 6
HOLDOVER RATES

STATE	HOMELESS RATE	N	HOUSED RATE	N
Minneapolis	38%	159	24%	62
Los Angeles	30%	78	18%	90
Philadelphia	35%	43	32%	25

Minneapolis: Masten, 1990
Los Angeles: Wood, Valdez, Hayashi, & Shen, 1990
Philadelphia: Rescorla, Parker, & Stolley, 1991

CONCLUSION

The disruptions associated with homelessness result in children being denied equal access to our nation's public schools, as well as problems obtaining services comparable to those received by permanently housed children. While access barriers have been instrumental in keeping homeless children out of school, the educational problems confronting homeless children do not end when access is obtained. Instead, they face other difficulties as manifested by irregular school attendance and poor academic performance.

Factors identified in the research literature as working against regular school

attendance and academic success include family stress; inadequate conditions in emergency shelter facilities; unstable shelter placements; disruptions in educational services; inadequate educational services; inadequate support services; and a lack of interagency communication and coordination (cf. Bowen, Purrington, Layton, & O'Brien, 1989; Bowen, Purrington, & O'Brien, 1990; California State Department of Education, 1989; Center for Law and Education, 1987; National Association of State Coordinators for Homeless Children and Youth, 1990; National Coalition for the Homeless, 1987a; Rafferty & Rollins, 1989; Rafferty & Shinn, 1991; Santini, 1991; U.S. Department of Education, 1989; 1990).

As a result of these negative factors associated with homelessness, homeless children may need remedial educational services to address academic deficits, preschool enrichment services to prevent academic failure, psychological support services to respond to emotional problems, and greater sensitivity from school personnel who often stigmatize them (cf. Eddowes & Hranitz, 1989; Gewirtzman & Fodor, 1987; Horowitz, Springer, & Kose, 1988; National Association of State Coordinators for Homeless Children and Youth, 1990). These services, however, are rarely provided.

The educational problems confronting homeless children will, no doubt, have long term repercussions. Students who experience school failure are less likely to be motivated to go to school and to give maximum effort. For example, research demonstrates that retaining students not only fails to help them catch up with peers and succeed in school, it actually contributes to academic failure and behavioral difficulties. Studies comparing academic gains by retained students with gains by academically comparable students who were promoted found that retained students do not benefit academically regardless of grade level or student achievement level (Hess, 1987; Holmes & Matthews, 1984; Labaree, 1984; National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1991). In addition, students who have been retained suffer poorer self-concepts, have more problems with social adjustments, and

express more negative attitudes towards school at the end of the period of retention, than do similar students who are promoted (Holmes & Matthews, 1984; Walker & Madhere, 1987). Research also shows a strong connection between grade retention and dropping out of school (Hess, 1987). For example, a student who is retained once faces a 40% increase in the likelihood of dropping out. If retained twice, that likelihood increases by 90% (Mann, 1986). Finally, according to a survey of school children conducted by Byrnes and Yamamoto (1986), next to blindness and death of a parent, grade retention is rated as most stressful.

CHAPTER THREE

THE EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 (P.L.100-77) includes a section that addresses the educational needs of homeless children and youth -- Title VII, Subtitle B, Education for Homeless Children and Youth.

THE STEWART B. McKINNEY HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT

Title VII, Subtitle B guarantees homeless children and youth access to the nation's public schools by establishing a federal policy that states must develop programs to assure that homeless children and youth have the same access to "a free, appropriate public education" as permanently housed children in the community. In other words, states are required to ensure that homeless children receive all of the services, including services provided under other federal programs, that children with established residences receive. The U.S. Department of Education is required to oversee the implementation of Subtitle VII-B.[3]

The McKinney Act did not seek to create a separate education system for homeless children: "***Homelessness alone should not be sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment***" [Section 721(3)]. Instead, it aimed to promote integrating homeless children into the existing public education system and programs. In addition, it provides states with federal funding to implement this policy. States receiving Title VII-B McKinney funds are required to gather information on the number and needs of homeless children; to determine the extent to which homeless children are attending school; to

---

[3] In addition to the provisions of Title VII, Subtitle B of the Act, other Federal statutes and regulations govern the administration of the program. These include the General Education Provision Act (GEPA), and the EDGAR requirements in Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations: Part 74 (Administration of Grants), Part 76 (State Administered Programs), Part 77 (Definitions that apply to Department Regulations), and Part 78 (Education Appeals Board).

identify the barriers preventing homeless children from attending school; and to develop and implement a State Plan to remove barriers and ensure that all homeless children have access to a free public education. It also requires that educational services available to other residents of the state be made available to homeless children who are eligible.[4]

As originally written, the Act established a two-year program of federal grants to state education agencies for FY87 and FY88. In November 1988, Congress reauthorized the Act, including its education provisions, and extended the law through FY90. The Act was reauthorized once again in November 1990, this time with significant amendments to those provisions addressing the educational rights of homeless children and youth.

THE McKINNEY HOMELESS ASSISTANCE AMENDMENTS OF 1990

On November 29, 1990, President Bush signed into the law the McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments of 1990 (P.L.101-645). Subtitle VII-B, Education of Homeless Children and Youth, was substantially amended by Title VI of the Amendments (Appendix A), and significantly expand federal directives to states to ensure that school districts appropriately respond to the educational needs of homeless children and youth (cf. National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, 1991b).

Particularly noteworthy is the expanded Statement of Policy mandating that states address <u>any</u> policies or laws that have any impact on educational opportunities. Previously, the Act only focused on residency laws. In addition, it explicitly states that funds are to be used to provide direct services (e.g., tutoring, remedial education services, staff development, parent education). Also noteworthy are the new responsibilities for each State Education Department: facilitate coordination between the agencies providing services

[4] Participation by states is not mandatory. However, states that do participate receive a grant awarded according to a population-based formula. Forty-nine states (all except Hawaii), the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico elected to participate.

to homeless children and their families; develop programs for school personnel; ensure that homeless children receive the services for which they are eligible; and adopt policies and practices to ensure that homeless children are not isolated or stigmatized. In addition, the Amendments require that State Plans be revised to contain provisions designed to ensure timely transfers of student records, and to incorporate the new language from the legislation. In the following section, we highlight some of the most significant aspects of Subtitle VII-B. Additions from the McKinney Amendments of 1990 are underlined.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Section 721(2) of the McKinney Act has been amended to mandate that states review and undertake steps to revise not only residency requirements, but also all other barriers to assure that homeless children and youth are afforded a free and appropriate public education.

> "***In any state that has a residency requirement as a component of its compulsory attendance laws, or other laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and homeless youth, the state will review and undertake steps to revise such laws, regulations, practices, or policies to assure that the children of homeless individuals and homeless youth are afforded a free and appropriate public education.***"

SCHOOL CHOICE

While the McKinney Act of 1987 discusses choice between the school district of origin and the school district where the child or youth is actually living, Section 722(e)(3) of the McKinney Amendments substitutes the term school of origin ("***the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled***") for school district of origin. In addition, local educational agencies are mandated to enroll homeless children in the same school that nonhomeless students are eligible to attend, as opposed to "*in the school district.*"

> "***The local educational agency of each homeless child or youth shall either (i) continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin; ... or (ii) enroll***

the child or youth in <u>any school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area is which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend</u> - whichever is in the child's best interest or the youth's best interest."

GUARDIANSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Section 722(e)(4) addresses the education of children who do not currently reside with their parent(s). This section was not amended in 1990.

"The choice regarding (educational) placement will be made regardless of whether the child or youth is living with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parents."

RECORDS KEPT BY THE SCHOOL

Section 722(e)(6) mandates the timely transfer of records when homeless children move from one district to another. While the McKinney Act of 1987 refers to *"the school records of each homeless child,"* the McKinney Amendments of 1990 expand on this definition to include any records ordinarily kept by the school.

"<u>Any records ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs</u> of each homeless child or youth shall be maintained (a) so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school district; and (b) in a manner consistent with section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act."

COMPARABLE SERVICES

Section 722(e)(5) requires that educational services to homeless children be provided on the same basis as those provided to their permanently housed peers. The McKinney Amendments of 1990 include transportation services in this section.

"Each homeless child shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school...including <u>transportation services</u>, educational services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria, such as compensatory educational programs for the disadvantaged, and educational programs for the handicapped and for students with limited English proficiency; programs in vocational education; programs for the gifted and talented; and school meal programs."

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the access barriers described above, which were part of the McKinney

Act of 1987 and expanded upon with the McKinney Amendments of 1990, the following additional requirements are set forth in the Amended Subtitle VII-B.

GRANTS FOR DIRECT SERVICES

The U.S. Department of Education interpreted the McKinney Act of 1987 to prohibit McKinney funds for uses other than administrative purposes. The McKinney Amendments [Section 722(c)(2)], in contrast, specifically allow grants for direct services that facilitate enrollment, attendance, and academic success.

> ***"Grants under this section shall be used ... to provide activities for and services to homeless children and homeless youths that enable such children and youths to enroll in, attend, and achieve success in school."***

Section 722(c)(6) states that monies received over and above FY90 amounts must be awarded to local education agencies for direct services. Otherwise, such grants are optional. Activities authorized for local education agencies receiving grants from the state education agency are outlined in Section 723(b).

> ***"(1) Primary activities. Not less than 50% of amounts provided under a grant under this section shall be used to provide tutoring, remedial education services, or other education services... (2) Related activities. Not less than 35, nor more than 50 percent ... may be used for activities... (e.g., expedited evaluations/screenings, staff development, preschool programs, parent education, after-school programs)."***

PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Section 722(c)(5) authorizes sensitivity training for school personnel.

> ***"Grants under this section shall be used ... to develop and implement programs for school personnel to heighten awareness of specific problems of the education of homeless children and youth."***

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

Section 722(e)(7) requires interagency coordination between local education agencies and other social service agencies.

> ***"Each local education agency serving homeless children and youth that receives assistance under this title shall coordinate with local social service agencies, and other agencies or programs providing services to such children or youth and their***

families."

Section 722(e)(8) requires that local education agencies that receive funding designate a homelessness liaison to ensure that services are received.

> *"Each local educational agency that receives assistance under this title shall designate a homelessness liaison to ensure that (a) homeless children and youth enroll and succeed in the schools of that agency; and (b) homeless families, children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services...."*

EXPANDED RESPONSIBILITY FOR STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS

The McKinney Act of 1987 requires each State Education Department to establish or designate a Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth. Subtitle VII-B outlined two major responsibilities for each state coordinator:

(a) Gather statewide data on

- The number and location of homeless children and youth in the state;
- The nature and extent of problems of access to, and placement of, homeless children and youth in elementary and secondary schools;
- The difficulties in identifying the special needs of homeless children; and

(b) Develop and carry out a State Plan that

- Guarantees every homeless child access to public education; and
- Assures that local education agencies within the state comply with the requirements of Subtitle VII-B.

The McKinney Amendments of 1990 expand on the provisions to be contained within each State Plan. Each state is now required to adopt a plan which contains provisions designed to:

- Develop programs for school personnel to heighten their awareness of the specific educational needs of runaway and homeless youth;
- Ensure that eligible homeless children are able to participate in federal, state, or local food programs;

- o Ensure that eligible homeless children participate in federal, state, or local before and after-school programs and provide for the disclosure of this data;

- o Address problems with respect to the education of homeless children and youth, including transportation issues, and enrollment delays;

- o Demonstrate that the state and local educational agencies in the state have developed and will review and revise policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in schools of the state; and

- o Ensure that homeless children and youths are not isolated or stigmatized.

Finally, there are two additional responsibilities for each state coordinator:

Facilitate interagency coordination

"***facilitate coordination between the state education agency, the state social services agency, and other agencies providing services to homeless children and Youth in their state***" [Section 722(d)(4)].

Facilitate coordination with community programs

"***develop relationships and coordinate with other relevant education, child development, or preschool programs and providers of services to homeless children, homeless families, and runaway and homeless youths (including domestic violence agencies, shelter operators, transitional housing facilities, runaway and homeless youth centers, and transitional living programs for homeless youths) in order to improve the provision of comprehensive services to homeless children and homeless youths and the families of such children and youths***" [Section 722(d)(4)].

EXPANDED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The McKinney Act requires the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) to oversee the implementation of Subtitle VII B. Additional duties mandated by the McKinney Amendments of 1990 are underlined:

- o Review applications, including State Plans, and allocate funds to states. <u>In reviewing the State Plans ... the Secretary shall evaluate whether state laws, policies, and practices described in such plans adequately address the problems of homeless children and homeless youth relating to access to education and placement as described in such plans</u>;

- o Monitor and review compliance by states;

- o Report to Congress at the end of each fiscal year;

- o Disseminate information to the states on exemplary programs that successfully address the needs of homeless children and youth.

- o Determine the best means of identifying, locating, and counting homeless children and youth; and

- o Provide such support and technical assistance to the state educational agencies as is required by such agencies to carry out their responsibilities under this subtitle.

In summary, the McKinney Amendments of 1990 expand the role of the DOE in monitoring and reviewing compliance with the provisions of Subtitle VII-B. Our hope is that this increased responsibility will help to eliminate problems identified in several recent studies that have examined the implementation of Subtitle VII-B. A recent report issued by the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (1991), however, suggests that the problems have not gone away.

CRITIQUE OF THE FEDERAL RESPONSE

While the initiatives from the McKinney Act have helped homeless children access educational services, much remains to be done. Limitations include noncompliance at the state and federal levels, weak provisions, limited focus, and inadequate funding levels.

NONCOMPLIANCE AT THE STATE LEVEL

Three studies that examined states' compliance with the McKinney educational provisions conclude that most states have failed to adequately implement the McKinney Act of 1987, that State Plans routinely omit provisions mandated by the Act, and that some State Plans were never adequately implemented (cf. Bowen et al., 1990; Center for Law and Education, 1990; National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 1990a; 1991). As previously mentioned, a 20 state survey of service providers conducted by the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (1990a) reveals that in many states, homeless children are still being denied access to education. Of the states surveyed: 60% report that residency requirements are still being imposed in a manner that excludes homeless children;

70% report difficulties in records transfer for homeless children; 40% report that guardianship requirements are being imposed in a manner that excludes homeless children; and 55% report that homeless children are being denied access to "comparable services" -- including school meals and special education programs.

These studies also indicate that State Plans routinely omit provisions expressly mandated by the McKinney Act. For example, school placement decisions are required to be made "in the best interest of the child," and mechanisms must be implemented to resolve disputes if and when they arise. Most states have authorized education officials, rather than parents, to make decisions regarding the educational placement of homeless children. Only four states specify that the parent has the primary right and responsibility to determine their child's school placement. In addition, a number of State Plans fail to include a dispute resolution process, or if they do, fail to specify the child's placement pending the resolution of the dispute, or to include specific time limits and due process protections for these processes. Finally, while most State Plans recognize the right of homeless children to receive the same educational services as permanently housed children in the community, and acknowledge the need for speedy transfer of records, few specify a plan to accomplish these goals.

NONCOMPLIANCE AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

The first criticism of the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) came as early as December 28, 1987 - six months after the McKinney Act was enacted. On that date, the National Coalition for the Homeless filed suit in federal court charging the DOE with unwarranted delays in implementing the educational provisions of the McKinney Act.

When the McKinney Act was enacted in July, 1987, Congress mandated that funds be made available to state education authorities expeditiously so that local programs would be operating by December 31, 1987. In addition, State Coordinators were to report on the

status of their programs by that date. Despite these mandates, the DOE did not provide access to the "first round" of grant monies until December 7, 1987, and states were not required to apply for funds until April 30, 1988 -- ten months after the McKinney Act was enacted. Thus, an entire year passed without use of available funding or establishment of State Plans to address the educational needs of homeless children and youth. Consequently, a mechanism was set in place whereby funds awarded from one federal fiscal year allocation are not used for the year in which they were intended.[5]

In response to these charges of unwarranted delays, the DOE entered into a settlement agreement on January 21, 1988, stipulating to an expedited timetable and implementation. Despite this consent decree, the DOE continued to be accused of failing to comply with its statutory duty to implement Subtitle VII B in a timely manner (Center for Law and Education, 1990; National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 1990a; 1991).

In addition to its failure to distribute funds in a timely manner, the DOE has been criticized for inadequately meeting other required duties. For example, the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (1990a), reports that the DOE:

- Has not provided state educational agencies with adequate guidance;
- Has interpreted the statute, without legal basis, to prohibit funds for uses other than administrative purposes;
- Has taken no action to monitor states' compliance with federal requirements; and
- Has failed to provide timely and accurate reports to Congress.

These criticisms are echoed in a report issued by the Center for Law and Education (1990). Their major criticism as that the DOE's failed to take a strong leadership role in

[5] In fact, grant awards for FY87 funds were issued to State education agencies well into FY88. Similarly, FY88 funds were being awarded through September 30, 1989 (U.S. Department of Education, 1990).

its review and approval of State Plans.

> ***"Such an aggressive role includes a far more substantive review of State Plans as well as other actions to ensure that state education agencies make real progress in remedying the barriers to homeless student access recognized three years ago in the McKinney Act and still in existence today"*** (p.ii).

Finally, another government agency focuses on its monitoring of funded programs. According to the U.S. General Accounting Office, (1990), the DOE had not, as of May 1990, monitored any of the states that received McKinney funding under Subtitle VII-B since the program was implemented in 1987. Further, the Center for Law and Education (1991) reports that, as of October 1990, the DOE had visited only three states.

WEAK PROVISIONS

In contrast to the Education for All Handicapped Act of 1975 which was built on an extensive network of preexisting state mandates, the McKinney Act does not provide a statutory guarantee for a free and appropriate education for homeless children (cf. Bowen et al., 1989). Instead, states can simply choose not to apply for the grant money. Further, even if states receiving grant money fail to comply, they will not be penalized.

LIMITED FOCUS

The McKinney Act of 1987 addresses only those barriers that keep homeless children from accessing educational services. It fails to ensure that they receive adequate services once they are enrolled in school. According to the National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (1990):

> ***"Getting homeless children through schoolhouse doors is not enough.... In opening the schoolhouse doors without addressing these needs, we may find that we are opening a revolving door through which homeless children enroll, experience failure, and prematurely exit"*** (p. 8).

In contrast, the McKinney Amendments of 1990 allow funding to be used for direct services, including tutoring, remedial education services, and after-school programs. While we applaud Congress for recognizing the need for services once children are enrolled in

school, homeless children are unlikely to benefit from the new and improved legislation due to the sharp disparity between funds appropriated and authorized.

INADEQUATE FUNDING LEVELS

Of the $355 and $358 million appropriated for implementing the McKinney act for fiscal years 1987 and 1988, only $4.6 and $4.8 million respectively (1.3% of the total) went to implement the Subtitle VII-B Program.[6] This amounts to less than ten dollars per year for every homeless child in the U.S. (National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, 1990). The McKinney Act also authorized funding to state or local education agencies for exceptional programs that effectively address the education needs of homeless students -- "relating to exemplary grants and dissemination of information activities." However, it was not until federal fiscal year 1990 that Congress appropriated funds ($2.3 million) for this part of the Act.[7]

To implement the new programs authorized in the McKinney Amendments, $50 million was authorized for FY91. Only $7.2 million, however, was appropriated. At the same time, exemplary program grants were discontinued. Thus, although FY90 and FY91 remained essentially the same, funds were to be distributed under the new McKinney language. Instead of using the bulk of the funding for administrative costs, state coordinators were required to facilitate interagency coordination, develop training programs for school personnel, revise laws, regulations, policies and practices, and monitor local education programs.

---

[6] The total appropriation for each of the next two years was $4.8 million. Third year (FY89) funding was not made available until November, 1989, and states were encouraged to use the third year funds (FY89) concurrently with second year (FY88) funds, for special one-time activities.

[7] The New York City BOE was among the 17 exemplary projects funded in FY90 by the DOE. The FY Grants range in size from $44,140 to $265,000. The Alternative High Schools Division received $123,557; Community School District 2 received $170,564.

CHAPTER FOUR

NEW YORK STATE'S COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL MANDATES

In response to the requirements of the McKinney Act, New York State Commissioner's Regulations (Section 100.2(x) and (y) of Title 8, NYCRR) were promulgated on May 20, 1988, and went into effect on July 8, 1988 (Appendix B). Thus, New York State became the first state to establish policy that eased the school residency problems of the homeless (Bowen et al., 1989; New York State Education Department, 1988). In response to the McKinney Amendments of 1990, New York State amended these Regulations (Title 8, NYCRR, Section 100.2) on July 19, 1991, and the Amendment was enacted on July 30, 1991.

THE REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

New York State goes beyond the mandates of the McKinney Act in several important ways. First, it authorizes the parent, the person in parental relation to a child, or the homeless child, if no parent is available, to decide whether to continue their child's education at the current school, or transfer into a local school.[8] Second, it allows parents to change the designation either before the end of the semester for which the designation is first made or within 60 days from the date of the designation, whichever is later. Third, it clarifies responsibility for the provision of transportation: transportation for children who both live in and attend school within the district will be paid for by the school district. All other transportation expenses are the responsibility of the Department of Social Services.

New York State does not adequately meet the McKinney Act requirements in

[8] Parents may also elect to transfer their child into a school district participating in a voluntary regional placement plan approved by the Commissioner of Education.

several critical ways. In the following section, we discuss definitional issues (homeless, child/youth, and "school-age"), dispute resolution process, options for school attendance, removal of barriers, comparable services, and transportation.

DEFINITION OF HOMELESS AND CHILD/YOUTH

Our first concern pertains to the lack of an appropriate definition of homeless and child/youth in the Commissioner's Regulations, Section 100.2(x). The McKinney Act is quite specific in its guidance to states: Section 103(a)(1)(2) provides a general definition of homeless individual.

> **For the purposes of this Act, the term *"homeless"* or *"homeless individual"* includes**
>
> ***"(1) an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and***
>
> ***(2) an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is-***
>
> > ***(A) a subsidized publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill); (B) an institution that provides temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or (C) a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings."***

According to the Nonregulatory Guidance, Subtitle VII-B of the Stewart B. McKinney Act, developed by the U.S. Department of Education, this includes children and youth who are living in family, adolescent, domestic violence, and transitional housing shelters, in cars, in abandoned buildings, and on the street. Additional conditions specified by the guidelines include:

1. In general, children living in foster homes should not be considered as homeless. However, **children placed in foster homeless for lack of shelter space**, should be considered homeless.

2. Sick or abandoned children in hospitals, who would otherwise be released if they had a place to go, should be considered as homeless.

3. Children living in trailer parks and campgrounds should be considered

homeless if they are staying temporarily in parks or camping areas because they lack living accommodation that would be considered adequate under Section 103 of the McKinney Act. Those living in trailer parks on a long term basis in adequate accommodations, however, should not be considered homeless.

Child and Youth: For the purposes of this Act, the term *"child"* or *"youth"* includes

"those persons who, if they were children of residents of the state, would be entitled to a free public education."

The Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, Section 100.2(x), adopted by the Board of Regents on May 20, 1988, do not incorporate these guidelines. Instead, a homeless child is defined as:

"a child entitled to attend school in the state of New York who, because of the unavailability of permanent housing, is living in a hotel, motel, shelter, or other temporary living arrangement in a situation in which the child or his or her family is receiving assistance and/or services from a local services district..."

The recent Amendment to the Commissioner's Regulation does not attempt to amend New York State's definition of "homeless" or "child" to bring New York State into compliance with federal requirements. In does however, provide a definition of homeless youth and mandates that runaway and homeless youth in a residential program are provided with the same entitlements as those children currently defined as homeless. As a result, this group of high risk students, who have not been receiving the educational services to which they are legally entitled under the McKinney Act of 1987, will finally begin to receive the services they have been entitled to receive since 1987. We are concerned, however, that restricting eligibility of services to runaway and homeless youth who are ***"housed in a residential program for runaway and homeless youth established pursuant to Article 19-H of the Executive Law,"*** actually excludes the majority of runaway and homeless youth in New York State. For example, the New York State Coalition for the Homeless estimates that only 1,200 of the 25,000 runaway and homeless youth in New York State

receive Division for Youth residential services (personal communication from Shelly Nortz, June 19, 1991).

Finally, the definition of "homeless individual" in the McKinney Act does not contain such limitations pertaining to assistance and/or services from the department of social services. All homeless children and youth, regardless of whether they are receiving any type of assistance and/or services, including undocumented children who are entitled to attend school, should be provided with the same protections.

Thus, the regulation continues to serve as a barrier to the enrollment of each homeless child and each homeless youth in school. It uses an extremely narrow definition of homeless youth, and leaves unchanged exceptionally narrow definitions of homeless and homeless child. Homeless children and youth would be far better served if the SED tracked the federal definitions of homeless child and homeless youth exactly. Furthermore, such noncompliance is a direct defiance of the McKinney Amendments of 1990 which mandates that states remove all barriers -- including regulation.

DEFINITION OF SCHOOL-AGE

Our second concern pertains to the denial of educational services to some homeless children. Subtitle VII-B applies to "***those persons who, if they were children of residents of the state, would be entitled to a free public education***." New York State, however, does not make any provisions for the education of homeless preschoolers. For example, if the school district offers a preschool program to four year olds, homeless four year olds should be considered to be of school-age if they would otherwise qualify for the district's preschool program. Since SED regulations require that special education services be available to three and four year olds with handicapping conditions, homeless three and four year olds with handicapping conditions are also eligible for special education and shall be considered to be of school-age. Similarly, SED regulations require that special education services be

available to visually impaired and hearing impaired children from birth. Therefore, homeless children with these handicapping condition are eligible for services from birth.

SED's position also defies Section 722(d)(5) of the McKinney Act which requires State Education Departments to "**develop relationships and coordinate with other relevant education, child development, or preschool programs....**" In addition, Section 723(b)(2)(E) indicates that it is also appropriate to use funding for direct services for "**the provision of developmentally appropriate early childhood programs for preschool-age children.**" Finally, this policy ignores other state regulations pertaining to preschoolers with handicapping conditions, and children between the ages of 16 and 21 who have not graduated from high school. The Commissioner's Regulation, Section 100.2(x) must be amended to address the educational needs of these categories of homeless children.

INADEQUATE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

The McKinney Act mandates a prompt dispute resolution process for homeless children and youth who are denied their right to enroll in school because of residency requirements. In response to this mandate, the Regulations of the New York State Commissioner of Education states that "***the determination of the board may be appealed ... and that the procedure for taking such an appeal may be obtained from the Office of Counsel.***" This paragraph was recently amended to include the SED's phone number.

This minimal appeals process is not a very useful strategy to respond to those who violate the McKinney Act by denying enrollment on the basis that a homeless child is not a resident, or that the homeless person does not fall within the state's narrow definition. The regulation should provide a process by which disputes will be resolved in a timely manner, as well as provisions for where children will attend school pending the resolution of a dispute.

OPTIONS FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Section 722(3) of the McKinney Amendments of 1990 clarifies the ambiguities of the McKinney Act of 1987 pertaining to "*school*" versus "*school district*." States are now required to either:

> "***(i) continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin (the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled), or (ii) enroll the child or youth in any school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend - whichever is in the child's best interest or the youth's best interest.***"

The recent amendment to the Commissioner's Regulation only partially addresses this requirement. Section 100.2(x), Paragraph (1) has been amended to include the following statement: "***Whenever the school district of last attendance is designated..., the child shall be entitled to return to the school building where previously enrolled.***" However, <u>the definition of school of current location has not been amended</u> as mandated, and continues to substitute "school district" for "school."

The removal of the word "district" in the federal law, means that the choice is one related to a particular school. Thus, the word "district" as a limitation of choice for homeless children in New York State must be removed from the Commissioner's Regulation. This would ensure that students who are transferring into local schools are allowed to enroll in <u>any</u> school allowed to be chosen by permanently housed students in the same attendance area, including open and restricted enrollment systems.

REMOVAL OF BARRIERS

Section 721(2) of the McKinney Amendments requires states to review and undertake steps to revise not only residency requirements, but <u>all</u> other laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and homeless youth. The amendment to the Chancellor's

Regulation does not address barriers other than residency requirements. To comply with the McKinney Act, it must.

COMPARABLE SERVICES

The report accompanying the House of Representatives Bill that became the 1990 Amendments, the Committee on Education and Labor expressed their concerns with regard to the denial of comparable services for homeless children.

> "***The committee is concerned that homeless children are not receiving the services for which they are eligible, in a comprehensive manner. The Committee bill directs the coordinators to work with parents, education agencies and providers of services for homeless children to improve the provision of appropriate education, nutrition, and pre- and after-school programs (including Head Start, special education, school breakfast and lunch, recreation programs, etc.) to homeless children and youth***" (emphasis added).[9]

Section 722(e)(5) of the McKinney Amendments mandates that homeless children receive all the services, including services provided under other federal programs, that children with established residences receive. This mandate is ignored in New York State regulations. In fact, the SED is opposed to the use of the word "comparable" in regulation, and to the listing of educational services which are required to be comparable according to the McKinney Act. Thus, the Commissioner's regulation does not direct local education agencies to provide homeless children and youth with services comparable to services offered to other students in the school. It should.

TRANSPORTATION

When children continue to attend their current schools, transportation is a tremendous barrier in New York State, and especially outside of NYC (cf. Santini, 1991). Nonetheless, the SED has no plan to correct existing practices or to develop any new process to address the urgent need for transportation, especially as it pertains to runaway and homeless youth who elect to attend their current schools. Since transportation is both

---

[9] House Report No. 101-583(I), as reprinted in 10F Code Cong. & Admin. News 1990 at p.6417-6418.

a barrier and a service which is explicitly subject to the McKinney Act comparability requirements, the Commissioner's Regulation should ensure that transportation is provided when needed to facilitate continuity of educational services.

THE NEW YORK STATE PLAN

As previously mentioned, the McKinney Act of 1987 requires each SED to establish or designate a Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth. Subtitle VII-B outlined two major responsibilities for each coordinator: (1) gather statewide data on the number and location of homeless children and youth in the state; the nature and extent of problems of access to, and placement of, homeless children and youth in elementary and secondary schools; the difficulties in identifying the special needs of homeless children; and (2) develop and carry out a State Plan that guarantees every homeless child access to public education and assures that local education agencies within the state comply with the requirements of Subtitle VII-B.

The New York SED applied for Subtitle VII-B "first year funding" in April, 1988 and was awarded $406,371 to implement the educational provisions of the McKinney Act in New York State. Although this allocation was made well into FFY88, the allocation actually came from FFY87 funds.[10] Consequently, the SED did not release its State Plan until April of 1989 -- almost two years after the McKinney Act was enacted.

The overall goals outlined in the 1989-1991 State Plan are designed to ensure that:

* Homeless school-age children are located and registered and regularly attend school.

* The educational needs of homeless children are promptly identified and services provided.

---

[10] New York State has continued to receive McKinney funding to implement Subtitle VII-B: $403,426 from FFY88 funds, $430,211 from FFY89 funds, and $434,294 from FFY90 funds was recently awarded. The FFY90 allocation funds the 1991-1992 budget program year. However, fifth year funds (from the FFY91 budget allocation) have also been awarded, and according to the U.S. Department of Education the approximately $700,000 allocation to New York State may be used at the same time as FFY90 funds. New York State, however, has not yet provided a plan for when or how FFY91 funds will be used.

* Related support services required by homeless children due to the condition of homelessness are identified and provided by schools in cooperation with appropriate agencies.

* A comprehensive collection of information regarding homeless children and youth will be developed.

The major limitation of the 1989-1991 State Plan pertains to its flawed data collection requirements. The SED uses data collected by the Department of Social Services (DSS) to provide Congress with a yearly report on the number of homeless school-age children in the state. This data is not known to be very reliable, especially since DSS maintains data only on those homeless persons who are assisted by local districts. The SED must improve its data collection procedures.

The McKinney Amendments expand on the provisions to be contained within each State Plan. Each state is now required to adopt a plan which contains provisions designed to (a) authorize school placement decisions; (b) provide resolutions for the prompt resolution of disputes regarding educational placements; (c) develop programs for school personnel; (d) ensure participation in food programs; (e) ensure participation in before and after-school programs; (f) address problems in gathering reliable data; (g) address educational problems, including transportation issues and enrollment delays; (h) remove educational barriers; and (i) ensure that homeless children and youth are not isolated or stigmatized.

In addition, each plan shall assure that local educational agencies within the state: ensure that homeless children be provided with services comparable to services offered to other students in the school; transfer any record ordinarily kept by the school in a timely fashion; and coordinate with other agencies. Finally, each state coordinator must facilitate coordination between other agencies and community programs.

The Board of Regents recently adopted and approved, as submitted, the New York

State Plan for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, as amended, for 1991-1994 (New York State Education Department, 1991). Unfortunately, most of the recommendations presented in Public Hearings on May 20 and 21, 1991, as well as suggestions made by the State's Advisory Committee for the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, did not make their way into the amended plan. Thus, critical deficiencies in the Plan were not corrected, including:

REMOVAL OF BARRIERS

The New York State Plan indicates that an intra-agency work group will be developed to identify barriers other than residency requirements, and to make recommendations on steps which will be undertaken to revise such laws, regulations, practices and policies. AFC feels that this is only a first step. While the timeline indicates that the workgroup will begin to identify the barriers by September, 1991, there is no plan for how or when the SED intends to remove barriers once they are identified.

RECORDS KEPT BY THE SCHOOL

The McKinney Amendments require the timely transfer of any records ordinarily kept by the school when homeless children move from one district to another. The Plan indicates that the SED has encouraged local education agencies (LEAs) to make records available in a timely fashion when any child or youth enters a new school district. In addition, the SED is currently studying existing systems to determine gaps relative to these issues, and when completed will issue directives to LEAs to address any deficiencies.

AFC feels that more is needed. The SED and others, including AFC, have encouraged the timely transfer of records for several years, with only limited success, at best. AFC urges the SED to take a much more aggressive role in solving this problem. The SED must undertake a more substantive review and amend current policies and procedures to ensure that LEAs remedy this important barrier recognized four years ago

in the McKinney Act and still in existence today.

COMPARABLE SERVICES

The McKinney Amendments require that educational services, including transportation, to homeless children be provided on the same basis as those provided to their permanently housed peers. The Plan indicates that the SED already provides comparable services to homeless children, including transportation. Thus, there are no activities related to monitoring or promoting the comparability of educational services. In our view, the SED needs to take a more active role in addressing this mandate. First, homeless children do not always receive services comparable to permanently housed children. Some children receive no services at all. Second, transportation is a problem. AFC suggests that the SED take a leadership role in ensuring compliance with this mandate.

DIRECT SERVICES

The McKinney Amendments mandate the provision of direct services that facilitate enrollment, attendance, and academic success.[11] The Plan indicates that the SED will first need to identify needed activities and services before grants are awarded to local educational agencies for the provision of direct services. The timeline for implementation of actual programs is not clear. AFC urges the SED to consolidate this process into a shorter period of time.

PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

The McKinney Amendments authorize the use of funds to develop and implement programs to heighten the awareness of school personnel. As with the provision of direct services for homeless children, the timeline for implementation of actual programs is not

---

[11] New York State has approximately $700,000 from FFY90 funds, which may be used for direct services in the 1991-1992 program year, in addition to the excess of FFY90 funds over FFY89 funds (approximately $265,706) which must be used for direct services. AFC continues to urge the SED to use these two years of funding concomitantly during the current school year.

clear. AFC urges the SED to consolidate this process into a shorter period of time.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

The McKinney Amendments mandate interagency coordination between local agencies that receive funding to serve homeless children and their families. The Plan addresses this mandate by stating that there is already close collaboration between LEAs and local departments of social services. More is needed. Specific strategies should be outlined to address how coordination between the various groups could be developed and maintained. These strategies also need to focus on additional agencies and programs providing services to homeless children, including community groups, emergency shelter workers, and health and mental health providers.

In addition, the SED is required to facilitate interagency coordination. The Plan indicates that the SED will continue to meet with the DSS and other state agencies to plan and implement policies. AFC suggests that the SED be much more explicit on how this mandate will be met. Finally, the SED is required to facilitate coordination with community programs. While the Plan indicates that the Office of the Coordinator will collaborate with the SED's Division of Early Childhood Education and the Division for Youth, there is no mention of other community programs or providers of services. There should be.

PARTICIPATION IN FOOD PROGRAMS

Given the detrimental impact of undernutrition on academic performance (Rafferty & Shinn, 1991), AFC urges the SED to collaborate more closely with the DSS to ensure that eligible homeless children receive the nutritional services to which they are entitled. Second, transportation barriers that sometimes prevent homeless children from arriving in school in time for breakfast must also be addressed.

PARTICIPATION IN BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The Plan indicates that this will be accomplished by informing local school districts that homeless children should be encouraged to participate in before and after-school programs. The extent to which they participate will be documented via a survey. AFC commends the SED for incorporating documentation of actual participation rates in its monitoring of this issue. However, transportation issues that sometimes keep homeless children from participating in available before and after-school programs must also be addressed.

TRANSPORTATION AND ENROLLMENT DELAYS AS BARRIERS

The Plan does not contain any provisions designed to address transportation issues and enrollment delays as required by the McKinney Amendments. It must.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the McKinney Amendments of 1990 significantly expand federal directives to states to ensure that school districts appropriately respond to the educational needs of homeless children and youth. AFC, however, is concerned that the amended Regulations of the Commissioner and the 1991-1994 State Plan do not offer a more comprehensive response to these expanded directives.

Critical to meaningful implementation of the 1990 Amendments is the extent to which State Plans actually resolve, rather than simply identify or discuss, the problems the Act now explicitly directs them to "address" (including lack of transportation and enrollment delays caused by immunization and residency requirements, guardianship issues, and lack of birth certificates, school records, and other documentation). However, the New York State Plan does not provide strategies to guide local education agencies as they attempt to meet the educational needs of homeless children and youth. In addition, while specific goals in the State Plan refer to each section of the McKinney Amendments, the

listed activities tend to be vague and often lack evidence of a plan to accomplish these goals and ensure that the mandates will be met. Finally, the timeline for plan activities do not represent a task-oriented approach. Instead, many of the activities are listed as "ongoing" and new activities need to be added to the timeline.

CHAPTER FIVE

A PROFILE OF HOMELESS CHILDREN IN NEW YORK CITY

Unlike many cities in the United States, homeless families with children in NYC have a legal right to emergency shelter. The Human Resources Administration (HRA) places homeless families in emergency shelter facilities, including four Tier I congregate shelters, 54 Tier II family centers, and 12 hotels (New York City Human Resources Administration, Homes Report, March 15, 1991).

Congregate shelters are city-operated, barracks type facilities with communal sleeping, bathing, and dining facilities. Families typically enter Tier II facilities after a period of time in the congregate shelters. Tier II family centers provide families with private sleeping quarters, bathrooms, and in some cases, private kitchens. These facilities are operated by not-for-profit agencies, the Human Resources Administration, or the Department of Housing Preservation and Development. Families placed in commercial "welfare' hotels usually have one room and a private or shared bathroom. They do not generally have cooking facilities, refrigerators or telephones. While some hotels have no restrictions on length of stay, others restrict families to a maximum of 30 days, in order to prevent residents from acquiring tenancy rights.

On March 1, 1991, there were 4,026 families with children, including 7,525 children, residing in emergency shelter facilities,[12] located in 25 of NYC's 32 community school districts. Overall, 459 families (11%) were in Tier I facilities, 2,915 (72%) were in Tier II facilities, and 652 (16%) were in hotels.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE RATES

On this same day, there were 3,016 homeless children enrolled in NYC schools.

[12] This number refers to homeless families on one particular day. Emergency shelter is provided to approximately 13,000 different families each year.

Most were elementary school-age (70%), followed by junior high school students (18%), and high school students (11%). An additional 60 students (2%) were in special programs for students with severe handicapping conditions (e.g., hard of hearing, visually impaired, or with severe emotional and social needs).

Table 7 provides the average attendance rates for each of these students groups for the month of February, 1991. Overall, high school students had the poorest profile: their attendance rate is 57.4%, and 15% have been absent for more than 30 days. Students with severe handicapping conditions did not fare much better; their attendance rate is 66.9%, and 10% have been absent for more than 30 days. Students in junior high and elementary schools had an overall rate of 72.3% and 77.9% respectively, with a much lower rate of long term absence (2.4% and 2.5%).

TABLE 7
ATTENDANCE RATES FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS IN NYC BY SCHOOL LEVEL[1]

GRADE LEVEL	N	RATE	N LTA	% LTA
Elementary	2,100	77.9%	52	2.5%
Junior High	535	72.3%	13	2.4%
High School	321	57.4%	47	15.0%
Special Education	60	66.9%	6	10.0%
TOTAL	3,016	74.5%	118	3.9%

[1] Attendance Data for February, 1991. LTA=Long term absence (>20 days).
Source:BOE, Office of Educational Data Services, Attendance Report, 5/7/91.

Table 8 provides a breakdown of the number of homeless families, and the number of students at each facility, within each community school district. It also provides the average rate of attendance for students residing at each facility during February, 1991. Attendance rates do not differentiate between children attending local schools and children attending school outside of the district where their shelter is located. Of the 59 facilities available to homeless families with school-age children on March 1, 1991, eight (8) currently had no school-age children. Of the remaining 51 facilities, four had an average

TABLE 8

A PROFILE OF HOMELESS FAMILIES AND STUDENTS IN NEW YORK CITY

ON MARCH 1, 1991

SCHOOL DISTRICT	FACILITY	NUMBER OF FAMILIES[1]	NUMBER OF STUDENTS[2]	AVERAGE ATTENDANCE RATE (2/91)
1	E. 3rd St*	55	31	74.1%
	Urban Family Ctr**	75	156	77.6%
	Nazareth Homes**	5	8	85.4%
	TOTAL	**135**	**195**	
2	Catherine St*	208	233	69.5%
	Red Cross EFC**	81	46	81.1%
	Alexander Abraham**	31	1	100%
	Fam. Respite Ctr**	38	0	
	TOTAL	**358**	**280**	
3	Sinergia**	3	2	74.2%
	West End Intergenerational**	54	11	39.7%
	Millbank House**	33	24	80.2%
	Regent Family Residence	177	58	66.2%
	TOTAL	**267**	**95**	
4	Robert Fox **	17	11	82.8%
	TOTAL	**17**	**11**	
5	Convent Ave**	76	127	78.4%
	E. Harlem Family Ctr**	13	25	87.7%
	Harriet Tubman**	96	128	75.3%
	Lenox	60	35	75.9%
	TOTAL	**245**	**315**	
6	Hamilton Place (28-day)	76	93	67.8%
	TOTAL	**76**	**93**	
7	Casa Rita (WIN)**	15	12	86.2%
	151st St. Shelter *	67	64	73.3%
	Powers Ave**	101	69	72.9%
	Jackson Family Ctr**	98	47	81.1%
	TOTAL	**281**	**192**	
8	Fox Street**	178	255	73.7%
	Prospect Interfaith**	88	47	78.9%
	TOTAL	**266**	**302**	
9	Help- Morris**	196	108	75.7%
	TOTAL	**196**	**108**	

Table 8 (cont'd)

10	Shearson Lehman (WIN)**	27	11	80.1%
	Thorpe**	16	8	96.5%
	Bronx Park (28-day)	10	17	88.1%
	TOTAL	**53**	**36**	
11	**NONE**			
12	Lee Goodwin**	31	12	86.5%
	Bx HELP - Crotona	15	3	71.4%
	TOTAL	**46**	**15**	
13	Auburn*	115)	182(incl**)	67.8%
	Auburn **	63)		
	Jefferson Ave.(WIN)**	5	2	63.8%
	Monica House (WIN)**	9	0	
	TOTAL	**192**	**184**	
14	Passage House**	6	0	
	TOTAL	**6**	**0**	
15	Samaritan House**	8	4	87.3%
	TOTAL	**8**	**4**	
16	Providence House II**	1	1	66.6%
	TOTAL	**1**	**1**	
17	Park Place (WIN)**	2	3	88.8%
	St. John's Family Ctr**	98	59	79.3%
	Providence House I**	4	0	
	Sterling Place (WIN)**	2	0	
	TOTAL	**106**	**62**	
18	**NONE**			
19	Help I**	189	172	79.2%
	Flatlands**	101	51	70.9%
	TOTAL	**290**	**223**	
20	**NONE**			
21	**NONE**			
22	Angel by the Sea (28-day)	95	22	69.9%
	TOTAL	**95**	**22**	
23	Amboy Street**	190	371	76.4%
	Dean St**	10	64	84.7%
	TOTAL	**200**	**435**	
24	**NONE**			

Table 8 (cont'd)

25	**NONE**			
26	**NONE**			
27	Lawrence	21	22	81.7%
	Skyway (28-day)	64	23	60.9%
	TOTAL	**85**	**45**	
28	Colonial	48	27	73.5%
	Lincoln Atlantic	57	9	64.8%
	Lincoln Court	66	22	80.1%
	St. Joseph's**	8	1	100%
	Providence III**	1	0	
	TOTAL	**180**	**59**	
29	Jamaica Family Res.**	71	77	70.9%
	Saratoga**	230	91	69.4%
	Springfield Gdns.(NY Blvd)**	67	39	65.3%
	TOTAL	**368**	**207**	
30	Westway	29	0	
	TOTAL	**29**	**0**	
31	Island Interfaith**	117	8	68.0%
	S.I. Respite Center**	45	46	72.9%
	Cosmopolitan Hotel	9		
	TOTAL	**171**	**54**	
32	Bushwick Family Res**	91	58	73.6%
	TOTAL	**91**	**58**	
	TOTAL	**3,762**[3]	**2,996**	

* = Tier I; ** = Tier II

1 The number of families at each facility was obtained from the Human Resources Administration, 3/1/91 HOMES Report.

2 The number of students at each facility was obtained from the New York City Board of Education, Office of Educational Data Services, Percentage of Attendance Report for February, 1991.

3 Facilities that do not accept any school-age children are not listed in this table.

attendance rate below 65%; 24 had an average attendance rate below 75%. Clearly, there is a need for improvement.

Table 9 provides a breakdown of the average attendance rates for elementary and junior high school students within each community school district, regardless of where they are actually sheltered. Of the 32 districts with elementary school-age students, four had an average attendance rate below 65%; 11 had an average attendance rate below 75%. The rates were lower for junior high school students: 6 districts had an average attendance rate below 65%; 15 had an average rate below 75%.

THE ROLE OF THE NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Given the mandates of the McKinney Act, and the requirements of the State Plan for educating homeless children and youth, local education officials were charged with devising methods to address the educational needs of homeless children. A response to federal and state initiatives was not necessary from NYC, since Chancellor's Regulation A-780 (Appendix C) had been proposed and adopted on March 31, 1987 -- three months prior to the enactment of the McKinney Act, and 15 months prior to the Commissioner's Regulation. In fact, NYC was the <u>first</u> major school system in the nation to enact regulations to remove the barriers to education confronting homeless children.

CHANCELLOR'S REGULATION A-780

Chancellor's Regulation A-780 establishes the BOE as the agency responsible for educating homeless children:

> *"The school system is the agency responsible for educating children and as such should be the chief advocate in providing and coordinating services for children residing in temporary housing."*

TABLE 9

ATTENDANCE RATES FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS WITHIN EACH COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT (February, 1991)

SCHOOL DISTRICT	ELEMENTARY STUDENTS	RATE OF ATTENDANCE	JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS	RATE OF ATTENDANCE
1	159	80.0%	29	78.7%
2	146	75.0%	42	55.4%
3	78	79.4%	8	75.9%
4	44	76.7%	10	81.3%
5	218	82.2%	42	70.3%
6	48	70.4%	10	74.1%
7	120	75.4%	43	81.1%
8	216	77.9%	44	64.7%
9	56	87.5%	32	76.9%
10	58	83.0%	17	71.4%
11	2	83.3%	2	75.0%
12	28	87.8%	12	71.2%
13	142	66.9%	19	73.8%
14	10	78.5%	7	83.3%
15	7	74.1%	4	62.5%
16	17	82.6%	3	79.6%
17	59	81.5%	18	75.7%
18	1	50.5%	2	58.3%
19	151	82.4%	17	86.2%
20	5	82.6%	3	88.8%
21	3	88.4%	0	N/A
22	13	60.1%	2	36.1%
23	224	82.0%	114	70.5%
24	3	24.0%	2	38.8%
25	1	94.4%	0	N/A
26	2	94.4%	2	94.4%
27	30	64.8%	17	72.8%
28	52	79.7%	0	N/A
29	129	72.1%	13	70.6%
30	1	94.4%	1	94.4%
31	44	71.0%	9	83.3%
32	33	70.1%	14	79.4%

Source: New York City Board of Education, Office Of Educational Data Services, Percentage of Attendance Report, 5/7/91.

One significant feature of Chancellor's Regulation A-780 is that it gives parents the right to make the school placement decision:

> ***"Instruction is to be continued at the parent's option at a school selected by the parent in accordance with this regulation."***

It also stipulates that homeless children who are transferring into local schools are to be placed in the same schools that are available to their permanently housed neighbors.

> ***"If the student chooses to accept a local placement in the new district, the district shall place the student in the school to which the temporary residence is zoned."***

It is also noteworthy that it advocates for educating homeless children in an integrated setting:

> ***"The child should be educated in an integrated setting which is appropriate to his/her educational needs."***

It also requires that districts with a *"critical mass"* of students in temporary housing provide comprehensive services throughout the school day, including:

> ***"Wake-up calls, transportation, breakfast, lunch, dinner, extended day enrichment activities, health services, daily attendance monitoring, guidance, and recreation."***

In addition, districts with a *"critical mass'* of homeless students are required to plan for expanded educational services, including:

> ***"12-month year, extended school day, smaller classes, and multi-service room at the school."***

Chancellor's Regulation A-780 restricts the provision of services to homeless children in emergency shelter facilities. It fails to address residency, records, special education, or student transportation. In addition, most of the requirements set forth are not actually implemented. For example, the school placement decisions for 119 of the 363 children who had previously lived in NYC, were made without the parent being offered a choice (Rafferty & Rollins, 1989). Other concerns will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM

Initially, NYC's program was operated from the Central Board. In September of 1988, as a result of serious flaws in the system (e.g., administrative problems, poor coordination with school districts, and inability to track students), responsibility for the education of homeless students moved from the Central office and its five regional hubs, to the 32 community school districts and individual high schools.

With the decentralization of the program, each community school district was charged with: (a) developing a plan that appropriately addressed placement entitlement, attendance outreach, and educational services for all students registered in district schools and residing in hotels and shelters located within the district; (b) assuming an expanded service component to provide on-site intake services, attendance monitoring and follow-up for all students, including those who attend schools in other districts; and (c) appointing a coordinator to oversee the program. Districts received a per capita amount of $675 for each homeless student attending school in their district to implement supplementary school services and after-school programs. They also received a per capita amount of $468 to implement the expanded service component.

Three districts (1, 2, and 15) developed pilot programs in September, 1988. By January, 1989, each district assumed full responsibility for coordinating educational services for all homeless students living within its boundaries, regardless of where these children attended school. The specific responsibilities of the Central Board and the Community School Districts are described in the State Plan (New York State Education Department, 1989).

The overall function of the Central office was to coordinate those functions which were common to all of the school districts, including: (a) coordinate the pupil accounting procedures and reporting of attendance analysis data; (b) provide training to district staff;

(c) coordinate with other city agencies with regard to hotel closings, etc.; (d) provide technical assistance as needed; and (e) facilitate interagency coordination and collaboration (cf. New York City Board of Education, Special Circular #6, August 26, 1988).

The Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment completed an assessment of the program for the 1988-1989 school year. This evaluation had three major components: (1) the impact of decentralization on the districts and the central program office; (2) the characteristics of the programs developed in three pilot and eight non-pilot districts (3, 5, 8, 9, 19, 23, 29, 31); and (3) the characteristics of the target population (New York City Board of Education, 1990).[13] Some of the major recommendations from that report are presented below.

> "***The central program office should continue to act as a central clearinghouse for program and pupil accounting information. It needs to pay special attention to those districts with little experience in serving students in temporary housing***" (p.ii).

> "***Community school districts need to develop programs that are adequate to the needs of the particular population in their district. They need to provide services that are appropriate and equitable, yet are flexible enough to cope with changes in the population being served***" (p.ii).

> "***Programs in the high schools need to have a central coordinator or clearinghouse. Programs should stress hands-on training, special language arts and expression programs, and tutoring during the school day***" (p.iii).

> "***A caring and committed school staff is essential to the success of programs at the school level. School staff members need to be sensitive to the needs of homeless children and their families, and to develop programs that provide high levels of personal attention. Community-based organizations can be an important source of help in meeting the needs of homeless students***" (p. iii).

In addition, several areas in need of improvement were identified by community school district staff. These included staff training, transportation, school records, pupil placement, problems with special education, student tracking, inaccurate or out of date

[13] Unfortunately, this document remains in draft form, and the evaluations for the 1989-1990, and 1990-1991 school years have not yet been completed.

information, locating families who have moved, relationship with central office, coordination with other districts, and tracking absentee pupils residing in other districts. Many of these problems have yet to be addressed.

During the 1989-1990 school year, the responsibilities of the Central Board and community school districts was essential unchanged (cf. New York City Board of Education, Special Circular #43, June 29, 1989). Districts were awarded $680 for each student attending district schools (i.e. on the district register at the end of October, 1990), to provide supplemental educational programs and services, including extended day programs, guidance services, remedial and tutorial programs, parent involvement activities, enrichment programs, and staff development. In addition, community school districts with emergency shelter facilities received $450 for each school-age child within each facility to provide on-site shelter-based services to ensure continuity of educational services, facilitation of prompt student placement and registration at schools, and to ensure that students receive the support services and programs to which they are entitled. The evaluation of this program has not yet been completed.

THE PROGRAM FOR THE 1990-1991 ACADEMIC YEAR

During the past school year, the Board's program for educating homeless children was drastically modified. In contrast with prior years where districts received separate allocations for on-site shelter-based services ($450 for each school-age child), and supplemental educational programs ($680 for each student in the district), the level of funding awarded to districts was sharply reduced. Consequently supplemental educational programs that had been in effect for the past few years were suddenly brought to a halt.

Another major change in policy was to prioritize homeless students attending community district schools for placement into existing Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention (AI/DP) programs. Attendance monitoring and the provision of on-site services

continued to be an essential component of the program, although funded at a much lower rate.[14] The Central Board continued to be responsible for providing technical assistance, attendance analysis data, tracking and monitoring of students, and interagency coordination and collaboration (cf. New York City Board of Education, Special Circular #46, May 31, 1990).

The program was funded primarily by Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (AI/DP) grants received from the SED. The total allocation for programs for students in temporary housing was $3,899,442. A breakdown of how these funds were used is presented in Table 10.

TABLE 10
DISTRIBUTION OF AI/DP FUNDS
FISCAL YEAR 1990-1991

Manhattan Emergency Assistance Unit	98,122
School Based Programs (Community School Districts)	1,000,000
Site Based Programs (Community School Districts)	1,600,000
School Based Programs (High School)	310,760
School Based Programs (Division of Special Education)	45,560
Central Administration of the Program	630,000
Evaluation of the Program	120,000
Transportation	95,000
Total for Students in Temporary Housing Program	$3,899,442

Source: New York City Board of Education, Office of Funded Programs

The loss of educational support services that had been in existence was a source of great conflict between district coordinators and the Central Board at the beginning of the school year. Consequently, limited funding for supplemental school-based services was reinstated several weeks into the school year. However, only those districts with fifty of

[14] The allocation was based on the number of units (families) at each site. There was no funding for facilities with less than 10 families. For facilities with 10-24 units, districts received $12,500. The allocation was 25-75 units was $25,000. For facilities with more than 75 units, $450 was allocated for each unit. This formula is in contrast with that used in prior years, when funding was allocated according to the number of children instead of families.

more homeless students received a per-capita supplemental allocation of $300 for each student. Unfortunately, there was great confusion regarding the distribution of funds: some districts did not receive them until well into 1991; others never received them. Furthermore, on March 6, 1991, when Central finally established accurate pupil counts, based on the October 1990 monthly attendance reports, funds were actually taken away from eleven districts, and four districts lost their entire allocation. Clearly, there is room for improvement in this area. Specifically, the BOE should implement the following strategies to correct last year's deficiencies:

- Establish policies and procedures for the timely distribution of funds, based on accurate counts of the number of homeless students.
- Revise the funding formula to take into consideration the transient nature of homelessness, and the fact that certain shelters and hotels experience a much greater turnover rate than others.
- Ensure that the program evaluation for the students in temporary housing unit for the 1989-1990 school year is completed as soon as possible. This long overdue report could provide some useful guidance. The 1990 - 1991 report must also be completed.

CONCLUSION

Unlike many cities, homeless families with children in NYC have the legal right to emergency shelter. In addition, the emergency shelter facilities, for the most part, have improved in recent years, with 72% of families with children now being sheltered in the more desirable Tier II family shelters. The conditions in some shelter facilities, the use of short-stay hotels, and the continual bouncing of families from one facility to another, however, continue to disrupt the lives of families who are homeless. Poor school attendance rates continue to be a major problem, especially for high school students and children in special education programs. Innovative strategies need to be implemented to ensure the regular school attendance of all homeless students.

Despite the mandates of Chancellor's Regulation A-780, specifically for districts with

a "critical mass" of homeless students, program funding does not provide for the adequate implementation of these services. In fact, the services being provided to homeless children diminished during the past school year. Fortunately, the provision of on-site service to ensure continuity of educational services, as well as attendance monitoring, continue to be important components of the program.

During the monitoring of the program for the 1988-1989 school year, several areas in need of improvement were identified. These included staff training, transportation, school records, pupil placement, problems with special education, student tracking, inaccurate or out of date information, locating families who have moved, relationship with central office, coordination with other districts, and tracking absentee pupils residing in other districts. In the following sections of this report, we assess the extent to which the educational needs of homeless children are currently being met. We also provide innovative strategies to address each of the problem areas that we discuss.

CHAPTER SIX

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT PROJECT

This research project addresses a major omission in the literature on the education of homeless children -- the development of effective strategies to ensure that the needs of all homeless children are being met. For homeless children to succeed in school, the first step must be to identify obstacles to timely enrollment for students who are transferring into local schools, as well as barriers to placement in appropriate classroom settings; barriers confronting children who are continuing their education at their current schools; and obstacles to regular school attendance and academic success. Once these barriers have been identified, effective strategies must be developed that address these barriers. The final step remains the responsibility of State Education Departments and Local Education Agencies: implement strategies to remove existing barriers, and ensure that homeless children are afforded a free and appropriate public education.

RESEARCH GOALS

GOAL #1. Our first goal was to identify and describe the obstacles to education confronting homeless children residing in emergency shelter facilities in NYC. We focused on six issues:

(1) Obstacles to accessing timely educational placement for students wishing to enroll in local schools;

(2) Obstacles to receiving appropriate placements confronting children who are transferring into local schools;

(3) Obstacles to maintaining continuity of educational services for students who are continuing their education at their current school;

(4) Obstacles to regular school attendance and academic success;

(5) The availability of educational support services to ensure regular school attendance and prevent academic failure; and

(6) Obstacles to accessing available educational support services.

Since the obstacles confronting homeless children, as well as the extent to which services are available and accessible, may vary depending on select factors such as age or grade level, we examined each of the above objectives from the perspective of six subgroups of homeless children:

(1) Preschoolers between the ages of three and five years;

(2) Five year old children who are eligible for kindergarten;

(3) Elementary school-age students;

(4) Junior high school students;

(5) High school students; and

(6) School-age children who have dropped out of school.

In addition to age and grade level as important factors affecting the education of homeless children, the existence of special needs and/or handicapping conditions may also be important. We therefore also examined each of the above objectives from the perspective of homeless children requiring special education or remedial services, as well as homeless children residing in domestic violence shelters.

GOAL #2. Our second goal was to develop strategies that effectively address the obstacles to educational placement and support services identified above. We focused on five issues:

(1) Strategies that ensure timely educational placement for students who are transferring into local schools;

(2) Strategies that ensure appropriate educational placements for children who are transferring into local schools;

(3) Strategies to facilitate continuity of educational services for students who are continuing their education at their current school;

(4) Strategies to ensure regular school attendance and academic success; and

(5) Strategies to encourage children who have dropped out of schools to complete their education.

In summary, the purpose of this research project was to identify the unique educational needs of homeless children as well as the obstacles to academic success that they confront, and then, to develop strategies to help ensure that homeless students enroll in school, attend classes, and achieve success.

RESEARCH METHODS

Twenty-two (22) community school district coordinators participated in structured interviews. At the time of our interviews, these coordinators were responsible for ensuring the education of approximately 2,991 students, from 3,747 families who were currently residing in 56 emergency shelter facilities. Every school district with at least 17 families sheltered within its boundaries was represented. Seven districts (11, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26) were excluded because there are were emergency shelter facilities located within their boundaries at the time of our interviews. Three districts were excluded because there were too few homeless families sheltered therein to make the interviews worthwhile (District 14 with 6 families; District 15 with 8 families; and District 16 with 1 family). Additional anecdotal information was obtained through informal interviews with BOE family assistants, superintendents, principals, social workers, and guidance personnel, as well as emergency shelter personnel, parents, and students. In addition domestic violence shelter directors were surveyed by mail to identify any special problems confronting homeless children in domestic violence shelters. Additional information was obtained by telephone and on-site visits to facilities, and through interviews with Human Resources Administration (HRA) personnel responsible for domestic violence shelters in NYC.

The structured interview with community school district coordinators was designed to elicit information on the following issues:

(1) The educational needs of homeless children and youth;

(2) Obstacles to timely and appropriate school placements for children transferring into local schools;

(3) Obstacles to the continuity of education confronting students who continue attending their current school;

(4) The availability of school-based support services to prevent academic failure;

(5) Obstacles to accessing available in-school support services;

(6) The availability of shelter-based educational support services;

(7) Obstacles to accessing available shelter-based support services;

(8) The availability of community-based educational support services;

(9) Obstacles to accessing available community-based support services;

(10) Coordination and communication with other agencies responsible for the education of homeless children;

(11) The existence of innovative models of service delivery; and

(12) Effective strategies to address the educational needs of homeless children and the obstacles to academic success that they confront.

Section I was designed to gather demographic information about the scope of family homelessness within the community school district. Questions focused on: (1) the number of homeless children sheltered within the district; (2) the proportion of children within each of the subgroups identified above (e.g., preschoolers; high school students); (3) the proportion of children sheltered within the school district who attend local schools; (4) the number of children in special education programs; and (5) the number of children attending district schools who are sheltered outside of the district. In addition, respondents were asked if children were attending their zoned schools, and if not, the reason why zoned schools were not being used.

Section II focused on the staffing and budget allocations for homeless students. The first set of questions focused on the total budget allocated to each district for emergency

shelter sites, permanent housing sites for formerly homeless families, and Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention (AI/DP) services. The second set of questions focused on the district's use of these funds, as well as the staff assigned by the district to address the educational needs of homeless and formerly homeless students.

Section III focused on the nature and extent of barriers confronting homeless children who elect to transfer into district schools. The first set of questions required respondents to rate a list of factors (e.g., residency requirements, school records) that pose barriers to homeless children in their attempts to access public school education. Respondents could rate each factor as a major obstacle, a minor obstacle, or not an obstacle. This question was asked with regard to five groups of students: elementary school-age children; students in junior high school; students requiring special education programs; school-age children who have never attended school before; and children from outside of NYC. Whenever obstacles were identified, respondents were asked to provide a solution that would adequately address the specific obstacle.

A second set of questions focused on the unique obstacles confronting homeless preschoolers accessing public schooling. Our focus here was on assessing the availability of Head Start and other preschool programs in the district, and participation of homeless preschoolers in these programs. Strategies to increase the participation of homeless preschoolers were also sought.

A third set of questions focused on access barriers confronting high school students. The focus here was on the provision of on-site intake services to facilitate either enrollment at local schools or to maintain enrollment at current schools, and the extent to which attendance monitoring and outreach services were provided. Other questions required respondents to identify the major issues and problems preventing high school students from accessing schooling and available services, as well as strategies to ensure their academic

success.

The final set of questions dealt with services provided to children in domestic violence shelters and the extent to which district coordinators attended to the educational needs of these children, as they do with other children who are homeless.

Section IV focused on educational support services provided to homeless students, obstacles to accessing available services, and strategies to bridge existing gaps in the provision of services. The overall goal was to identify strategies that facilitate continuity of educational services, minimize unnecessary disruptions while children are homeless, and ensure academic success once children are enrolled in school.

The first question required respondents to rate a number of actions and/or services that would facilitate timely school placement, and also increase the school attendance of homeless students. These factors included day care services for teen parents, better coordination between school district personnel and shelter providers, and the provision of school clothes and supplies.

The second question required respondents to rate the importance of select instructional and educational support services to prevent academic failure among homeless children. These items included preschool enrichment services, parental training and involvement, after-school programs, and sensitivity of school personnel.

The third set of questions required respondents to describe the systems that they have in place for other important program components. They include: (a) coordination of educational services with shelter providers and other agencies responsible for the education of homeless children; (b) awareness and sensitivity of teachers and other school administrators; (c) parental involvement; and (d) coordinating with other school district programs. Our focus here was to rely primarily on open-ended questions which required respondents to share ideas to improve the delivery of educational services to homeless

children.

The fourth set of questions focused on services provided to homeless children. Respondents were asked to describe the availability of AI/DP programs in their districts, the essential components of these programs, and the proportion of homeless children who actually participated in available programs. The final set of questions focused on children requiring special educational services, and the extent to which their needs were being met.

Section V dealt with problems confronting students who do not transfer into local district schools. Respondents were asked to assess the extent of specific problems such as transportation, lateness, and inability to participate in after-school programs.

Section VII focused on barriers that keep students from attending school once they are enrolled. Specific items focused on such factors as fatigue, family stress, high mobility, and shelter conditions.

Section VIII consisted of two items assessing the major problems confronting school-age children who have dropped out of school, and the extent to which outreach efforts were made to target this often neglected population.

Section IX assessed the availability of shelter and community-based educational support services, and the obstacles that prevent children from accessing available services.

Section X required respondents to describe the existence of innovative models of service delivery and exemplary programs that successfully address the education and special needs of homeless children in their district. Our focus here was to rely primarily on open-ended questions which required respondents to share ideas to improve the delivery of educational services to homeless children.

PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Chapter seven describes the barriers that delay timely school placements for children transferring into local schools, and obstacles to continuity of educational services for

children continuing to attend their current schools. Chapter eight describes the barriers that prevent or delay children from being placed appropriately. Chapter nine focuses on obstacles to school attendance and academic success. Chapter ten describes the availability of educational support services to ensure school attendance, and the extent to which available services meet the needs of homeless children. Chapter eleven describes the availability of educational support services to prevent academic failure, obstacles confronting children in their attempts to access available support services, and the limitations of available support services. Chapter twelve provides a conclusion and discussion of our research findings.

We begin each chapter by providing a general overview of our findings with regard to the specific issue being addressed. We then describe additional problems encountered by specific groups of children (e.g., preschoolers, students with handicapping conditions, high school students). We conclude each section by providing effective strategies that address the previously identified barriers.

CHAPTER SEVEN

BARRIERS TO TIMELY SCHOOL PLACEMENTS

As previously mentioned, residency requirements, guardianship requirements, transfer of academic and health records, and transportation problems are often identified as major barriers confronting homeless children in their attempts to access our nation's public schools. Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney Act, in fact, was implemented in 1987 to specifically address these well known barriers to education.

In this study, we found that, with the exception of transportation problems, especially for children who do not transfer into local schools, residency requirements for high school students, and delays in the transfer of immunization records, especially for children from Puerto Rico, these barriers neither significantly prevent nor delay homeless children from obtaining access to public schools in NYC. Significant delays, however, in receiving school records are having a detrimental impact on appropriate school placements. We found that timely school placement in local schools or continuity of education at current schools is associated with other less frequently cited factors.

- Timely school placement in local schools and continuity of education at current schools is associated with successful identification of the children.
- Timely identification of children is associated with successful outreach services.
- Timely identification of children and successful outreach services are facilitated by interagency and intraagency coordination and communication.
- There is no adequate system in place to facilitate continuity of educational services before children move to a different shelter, or are relocated into permanent housing.
- Some schools have restrictions on when parents can register their children.

- Some districts require children to be reimmunized if they do not have their papers with them.

- Transportation problems delay the continuity of education, especially for children who do not transfer into local schools.

We also identified some problems that apply to specific groups of homeless children, including:

- Kindergarten children are routinely denied access to schooling.

- Efforts are rarely made to place preschoolers into available programs.

- There are no policies or procedures to address the educational needs of preschoolers with handicapping conditions.

- High school students are routinely denied assistance to transfer into local schools, or continue attending their current school.

- Outreach and intake services are not provided to homeless families in domestic violence programs operated by HRA's Domestic Violence Unit.

FINDING 1: Timely school placement in local schools and continuity of education at current schools is associated with successful identification of the children.

The first essential requirement to ensuring timely placement in local schools, or continuity of education at current schools, is that children be identified as they are placed in a shelter or hotel, and that data be maintained on those children. For the most part, community school districts in NYC are doing an outstanding job of identifying compulsory school-age children when they enter emergency shelter facilities. However, a limited number of shelter directors indicated that they were not satisfied.

Our attempt to gather an accurate estimate of the number of homeless school-age children residing within each community school district, information about where each elementary, junior high, and high school student attends school, and how many students from shelters outside of the district were attending district schools proved to be much more difficult that we had anticipated. In fact, only 4 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed

were able to readily provide us with this information.[15]

The major problem in accessing accurate data was related to how data was being maintained by each district coordinator. Some relied on scraps of papers; others had excellent computer programs which kept track of the children. Another problem is that district personnel tend to maintain data primarily on children residing in emergency shelter facilities within their district boundaries who are attending district schools, and to a lesser degree on children from outside the district who are attending district schools. Thus, high school students, and children attending out of district schools are often forgotten once the intake is completed and transportation arranged.[16] This occurs primarily because most districts provide attendance monitoring and follow-up services only to students attending schools in their district. The High School Division is responsible for the attendance monitoring of all high school students, regardless of where they live, and when children are attending out of district schools, their attendance is monitored by the district where they attend school. We will return to a discussion of these issues in a later section.

Effective strategies:

- Every community school district must be required to establish and implement policies and procedures to ensure that children are identified upon entry into emergency shelter facilities. Districts with excellent policies and procedures in place should be asked to share their strategies with district coordinators who need assistance.
- Each district coordinator should be required to maintain accurate data on where every student residing in a shelter within their jurisdiction is attending school, including high school students. They should also maintain a list of students attending district schools who are sheltered outside the district.
- The Central Board must establish a standardized procedure for the collection and maintenance of data. Districts with efficient systems of data collection in place should be asked for their input into the design of this system.

---

[15] In addition, an April, 1991 letter requesting information on the number of school-age children at each emergency shelter facility from the New York City Human Resources Administration has gone unanswered, despite repeated phone calls.

[16] This is also problematic for the junior high school students in two Brooklyn districts, whose zoned school is actually in a different district, as well as for children requiring bilingual services who cannot be placed in district schools because the necessary services are not available in the district.

FINDING 2: Timely identification of children is associated with successful outreach services.

An essential component of successful identification of children as they enter the emergency shelter system, is adequate and timely outreach services provided by the BOE. This is augmented when BOE personnel are actually stationed on-site at the emergency shelter facility. Thus, as families enter the facility, the educational intake process can be completed. Some districts go beyond the actual requirements, and have developed enrollment packets that contain all of the necessary forms for school registration. Parents with children transferring into district schools are assisted in completing these forms at the shelter site, making the process faster for school secretaries and easier for parents.

Of the 56 emergency shelters within the jurisdiction of the 22 district coordinators interviewed, only 24 had personnel stationed on-site at the facility; 22 had personnel who visited the site on a regular or daily basis; and 10 were left to rely on their own emergency shelter staff to provide this importance service, in many cases without any assistance from the BOE. While it could be argued that having on-site shelter staff stationed at some of the smaller facilities is unnecessary, the denial of this essential service component at larger facilities simply cannot be justified. Nonetheless, we found no on-site person stationed at 8 of the larger facilities -- which sheltered between 40 and 190 families. In some cases, shelters or hotels have actually refused to provide the BOE with the necessary space to provide this service.

Also troublesome was our finding that 10 shelters were left without any BOE representative to conduct intake services, inform parents of their legal rights with regard to the education of their children, and make the necessary school arrangements. While most of these shelters were small (i.e. less than 10 families), one had 17 families.

Effective strategies:

- o In order to ensure that intake services are provided within 24 hours of emergency shelter placements, each shelter facility must be visited by a BOE representative on at least a daily basis. On-site personnel should be stationed at each emergency shelter facility with 25 or more families, for at least four hours every day (preferably before and after-school hours).

- o HRA must arrange for office space at each site where BOE personnel can be located. This office should be located in an area which is accessible to families.

- o Provisions must be made to ensure that parents are provided with intake services in their dominant language.

- o Pre-registration services at the shelter site should be provided for all children who are transferring into district schools, to expedite the process when the family goes to the school to register.

FINDING 3: Timely identification of children and successful outreach services are facilitated by interagency and intraagency coordination and communication.

Many district coordinators indicated that they had achieved an outstanding level of coordination with emergency shelter providers in their community school district. To help identify school-age children in a timely manner, several district coordinators indicated that they need more cooperation from the HRA and emergency shelter providers, especially with regard to prompt notice when a new family enters a shelter or hotel within their school district. Many suggested that the HRA could even go beyond this and inform them of the ages of the children in each family.

At some sites, information between the HRA and the BOE flows more freely than in others. In some cases, shelters provide daily intake sheets, which enable BOE family assistants to contact new families as they arrive. In rare cases, shelter staff obtain the names and ages of the children as the family goes through the intake procedure as they enter the shelter. At the completion of this interview, the family is escorted to the BOE's on-site office, where the education intake is then completed by the BOE family assistant. Should the family assistant not be available at that time, this information is left for them. Thus, when the family assistant returns, s/he knows who the new families are and where they can be located.

Effective strategies:

- The Central Board should coordinate with the HRA to establish a formal communication system whereby shelter directors inform the BOE of new arrivals at the shelter on a daily basis. Information should be provided on the family names, names and ages of the children, and where they can be located.

- New families entering each emergency shelter facility should be told where to locate the BOE workers who are responsible for completing the education intake.

- Signs should be posted in prominent areas of each emergency shelter facility which inform parents of their educational rights and where the BOE representative can be found.

- The Central Board should recognize and document existing working models of coordination. District coordinators with outstanding models in place should be required to share their strategies.

FINDING 4: There is no adequate system in place to facilitate continuity of educational services before children move to a different shelter, or are relocated into permanent housing.

When families move into a different shelter, or into permanent housing, continuity of educational services would be greatly enhanced if they met with BOE workers prior to their move. While children who move to a different shelter are generally identified by the family assistant at the new site, children who move into permanent housing often receive no services at all. In addition, the schools where the children previously attended have no idea where the family has moved to until the new school requests the records.

Some shelters inform the BOE as families leave. In rare cases, exit interviews are completed by the shelter staff, who then escort the family to the BOE office. This enables BOE staff to coordinate with their counterparts at the new shelter site. If the family is moving into permanent housing, they are able to inform the family of their educational rights, provide them with a contact person and phone number in the school district where they will be residing, and arrange new school placements for children transferring schools. This facilitates continuity of education when the children move.

This process also enables the BOE to inform the relevant school of the child's change of address, that the family is in the process of moving, and the parent's decision

regarding school placement. This information could also be shared with the attendance teacher at the school, and placed in the child's biofile at the Central Board. A major problem, however, is when families are administratively discharged: the family suddenly disappears -- often in the middle of the night; the children are not attending school; and nobody knows where they are.

Effective strategies:

- Every shelter should provide BOE personnel with a daily list of families who are leaving the shelter, including information on where each family is moving.
- Shelter policies should require that families meet with BOE personnel prior to their leaving the facility.
- When families suddenly move, or are referred back to the Emergency Assistance Unit (EAU) for placement, the Central Board should be able to find out where they have been moved. The HRA Division of Income Maintenance, which has the most up to date information on each family's location, should be required to provide the Central Board with this information on a daily basis. This would enable them to share this information with the district coordinator responsible for the shelter where the family was previously located, as well as with the district coordinator in the new location.
- The Central Board should facilitate meetings between district personnel, school staff, the HRA, and housing developers in order to prepare for the enrollment of new students in districts with a large influx of formerly homeless families.

FINDING 5: Some schools have restrictions on when parents can register their children.

Although this is not a major problem, a few district coordinators indicated that certain schools have restrictions on days and times when parents may register their children for school. In violation of Chancellor's Regulation A-101, some schools will not register children after a certain time, and instead tell families that "***registration is over, come back tomorrow***." In other cases, provisions are not made to facilitate registration on days when pupil accounting secretaries are absent.

Effective strategies:

- Parents should not be prevented from registering their children at school: registration must be permitted at the schools every day of the school year, and every hour of the school day, in accordance with Chancellor's Regulation A-101.
- School principals should be required to make alternative arrangements when the person responsible for registering children in school is out sick or on vacation.

FINDING 6: Some districts require children to be reimmunized if they do not have their papers with them.

In NYC, school-age children cannot attend school unless they have been immunized, or are in the process of being immunized. While most districts do not require the actual immunization papers of children who were previously in NYC schools in order to register them, three district coordinators indicated that their district policies require that children be reimmunized if they do not have their papers with them, and their records cannot be located. This is especially problematic for homeless children, who because of the transience of their living arrangements, are more likely to have their immunization records either lost or misplaced. It also violates Chancellor's Regulation A-710, which states that children do not need proof of immunization if they were previously attending a NYC public school. One district coordinator who routinely held up the school placement process because of missing health records, stated:

> *"Parents need to bring the immunization papers to the school before we will register their child (even if the child was previously in a NYC school). This information is in the records, but we don't get them for a long time. If the family does not have proof of immunization, their child cannot go to school. They have to go to the Department of Health to get a copy, or they have to be reimmunized. We will not register them without the form."*

Being required to present immunization papers in order to register in school is even more problematic for children who previously attended schools outside of NYC, whose records generally take longer to be received.

Effective strategies:

- The Central Board must inform all district and school staff that difficulties obtaining immunization records cannot prevent or delay children who previously attended NYC schools from being placed in school, in accordance with Chancellor's Regulation A-710.
- District and school personnel should be informed that the McKinney Act mandates the timely transfer of health records, and that barriers to meeting this mandate must be removed.
- The BOE's computerized database -- the Automate the Schools (ATS) system -- should record the actual dates of immunization for each child and each treatment. Thus, school districts would be able to readily obtain this information when children do not have their

immunization records available.

- o Each district's a health coordinator and/or supervising nurse should review school-wide immunization status reports whenever it is necessary to confirm that children previously in NYC schools have met the necessary immunization requirements.

- o Immunization records should be faxed from each child's former school upon request, along with other school records, regardless of that school's location.

- o Children from outside of NYC who do not have available proof of immunization, must be allowed to register in accordance with Chancellor's Regulation A-710. Since children cannot be admitted to class without proof of immunization, district coordinators should do everything in their power to assist the family to obtain the required records with minimum delay. One strategy is to contact the child's former school for oral confirmation that the child has been immunized. Department of Health regulation establishes oral confirmation as sufficient basis to enroll a student with written confirmation to follow.

FINDING 7: Transportation problems delay the continuity of education, especially for children who do not transfer into local schools.

As a result of litigation brought against NYC by the Legal Aid Society in 1985, the New York State Department of Social Services (DSS) is required to provide the parent of each school-age child who needs accompaniment to and from school with a transportation allowance. The DSS is also required to provide each child with sufficient funds to travel to and from school until the BOE provides such child with a transportation pass.

Despite this litigation, transportation problems continue to keep homeless children out of school. Overall, 14 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed reported that delays in the issuance of passes to elementary and junior high school students are a major barrier to school attendance. When we asked this question with regard to high school students, 7 responded that it was a major barrier and 9 responded that they did not know because they do not get involved in the process for high school students.

According to district coordinators, the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) does not always process requests as expeditiously as necessary. Some districts reported being told by OPT that they had to wait until the following month to be issued with the required passes. In some cases, there is no process in place to ensure that each child and, where necessary, their parents, are provided with sufficient funds to travel to and from school

until such time as passes become available. Without funds or passes, children must wait at the shelter until their pass arrives.

Additional problems confront parents who need to escort their children to and from school. First, several school district personnel were unaware of this entitlement until we brought it to their attention, and therefore, were not informing their clients of this option. Second, districts that actually issued a letter to parents to take to their public assistance case worker, indicated that income maintenance staff often refuse to honor the request.

Effective Strategies:

- The Office of Pupil Transportation must be reminded that homeless students are entitled to expedited processing of transportation requests.
- The Central Board must ensure that tokens are provided to all students, and their parents if necessary, until transportation passes are issued.
- BOE intake workers and HRA income maintenance workers must be informed of the transportation entitlements for parents who need to escort their children to and from school, as per the New York State Department of Social Services transmittal #88-ADM-41, dated 9/1/88.

ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS

Certain groups of students confront additional obstacles to timely school placement. These include: children who are eligible for kindergarten; preschoolers; preschoolers with handicapping conditions; high school students; and children in domestic violence shelters.

FINDING 8: Kindergarten children are routinely denied access to schooling.

Children who are eligible for kindergarten programs are routinely being denied access to school. One district coordinator put it this way:

> *"We have no room for them. Kindergarten is not mandated. Given the overcrowding in our district schools, we tend not to bother with them."*

Many respondents (n=8) indicated that kindergarten programs in their districts were full, and generally not available for homeless children. Sometimes, when zoned school programs are filled, parents are offered space at a more distant school, often at a different school from the child's siblings, and without transportation. In some cases, children are

placed on a waiting list, and receive placement in a few weeks. In other cases, the children are never placed, and must wait until they turn six years old before they are given access to school.

These practices clearly violate the legal rights of these children. For example, Section 3202 of the Education Law provides that five year olds have the right to attend school as long as they turn five before December 1st. The BOE is not required to establish kindergarten programs, but if sufficient kindergarten classes do not exist, five year olds have the right to start first grade (1ED. DEPT. REP. 775, 1952). However, Section 3205 of the law provides that they are not required to attend school until age six. Thus, attendance of 5 year olds is at the discretion of their parents, not of the BOE.

Effective strategies:

- The Central Board must remind district and school personnel that it is illegal to deny children access to kindergarten.
- Kindergarten children should be placed in their zoned schools. If this is not possible, actual school bus transportation should be provided.

FINDING 9: Efforts are rarely made to place preschoolers into available programs.

Even when families are permanently housed, the scarcity of available day care in NYC is problematic. For many of New York's poor and working class parents, the City's public day care system, run by the Agency for Child Development (ACD), is not only a bureaucratic nightmare, but is also often inaccessible. For example, city-subsidized day care centers have spaces for only 45,000 children -- just 12% of those who are eligible (City of New York, 1990). Spaces for infants and toddlers are the most scarce: only about 4% of those seeking care get placed; for preschoolers, only 35% can be placed. Last year, however, the ACD took an important step and reserved 832 day care slots for homeless preschoolers. Quite disturbing, however, was our finding that many of these slots were not actually used (personal communication from ACD, March 13, 1991). Strategies must be

implemented to ensure that parents are informed of available day care options in the community.

In addition to the public day care system in the community, most community school districts have preschool programs in the schools (e.g., Head Start, Giant Step, Smart Start). Project Smart Start, for example, is a half day comprehensive educational program for four year olds. The components of this program include a developmentally appropriate curriculum, health, social and nutrition services, parent involvement, and staff development. Clearly, homeless preschoolers could benefit from this program. In rare cases, districts reserve a certain amount of slots for homeless children, enabling them to obtain important early intervention services. However, for the most part, district coordinators make no effort to place children into available programs either in the community or in the schools. According to one district coordinator:

> ***"We don't focus on those children. They don't have to go to school. We don't actively recruit preschoolers."***

In addition to a lack of outreach by BOE personnel when programs are available, many homeless students are excluded from early childhood education because application and selection is done periodically, and transient families may not be in the right place at the right time. For example, families in short-stay shelter and hotel placements with children on a waiting list, often move before their child's name is called. Thus, they must begin the process again at their next shelter location. Also, in some districts, slots are allocated by lottery in the springtime, preventing most homeless families with preschoolers from even being eligible to apply for available services. Furthermore, those who win the lottery and obtain placement are often unable to accept, because the odds are that they will be in a different shelter by the beginning of the school year. The problems are even greater for children who require bilingual preschool programs.

Particularly troublesome, was our finding that homeless children are not being placed in Head Start programs, which serve 3 to 5 year olds. Head Start offers the types of comprehensive services that homeless families need, including a holistic approach to education, development, health, and parenting skills. Clearly, homeless families can benefit from being enrolled in a Head Start program that continues once they are permanently housed. Yet, homeless children in NYC are not considered eligible to participate in Head Start programs for two major reasons. First, Head Start programs must maintain a minimum average daily attendance to receive their federal reimbursement; homeless children with sporadic attendance as result of shelter living can jeopardize this funding. Second, Head Start programs are required to provide follow-up services; homeless children are often extremely difficult to follow-up.

Effective strategies:

- o District coordinators must be made aware of McKinney Act mandates: If preschool services are available to permanently housed children in the district, then homeless preschoolers are also eligible to receive these services.
- o District coordinators should be required to provide intake services for preschoolers who are eligible to attend district programs, and place eligible children into district programs wherever available. Each community school district should reserve an appropriate proportion of preschool slots for homeless children.
- o The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services must be reminded that the McKinney Act mandates that any laws, practices, or policies that prevent homeless children from accessing an education must be removed. Modifications such as waiving performance requirements regarding attendance and follow-up must be made so that Head Start programs can accommodate homeless preschoolers.

FINDING 10: There are no policies or procedures to address the educational needs of preschoolers with handicapping conditions.

In July, 1989, Chapter 243 of the Laws of 1989 was enacted. The municipality of residence, and the local district Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE), was given the responsibility for ensuring that preschool children ages three and four with suspected handicapping conditions are evaluated and offered an appropriate placement. Prior to this date, the Family Court was responsible for this process. Although it is the

responsibility of parents who wish to have their child evaluated to contact the local school district CPSE, or the Early Childhood Direction Center in their area, homeless parents are generally not placed in their own communities and are therefore familiar neither with neighborhood resources nor how to access available services. Thus, they may not independently seek assistance. Our major finding is that preschoolers are generally not being identified by BOE personnel.

> ***"We don't know who they are -- nobody tells us and I don't come across them. This is out of our domain. We don't provide services unless children are at least five years old. They could get evaluated then, or the health officer could identify them during the health screening. There should be a liaison with the health office and the CPSE."***

Only two out of 22 district coordinators indicated that they had a policy and procedure to ensure that homeless preschoolers suspected of having handicapping conditions receive evaluation and program services. They actually ask the parent about their preschoolers during the intake process. Some district coordinators, however, indicated that when parents bring to their attention that the child was previously in a program, they will intervene. One Brooklyn coordinator indicated that they had a preschooler with a handicapping condition in one of their shelters, who had previously been in a hospital-based program in the Bronx. However, while waiting for the I.E.P. and other pertinent records to arrive, the child was moved to a different shelter. Intervention strategies cannot be implemented when a child is here today and gone tomorrow.

Other district coordinators indicated that they do not intervene, even when they are aware of the existence of these preschoolers in their designated shelters. One family assistant indicated that there was a preschooler with Down Syndrome in her facility, but she had no idea how the child got back and forth to school, nor whether or not the parent had received any assistance keeping her child in school. Another discussed a four year old who had been born drug exposed. The child was hyperactive, and displayed erratic

behavior. As a result of the disruptions being caused by the child, the family was administratively discharged from the shelter. Nobody suggested that the child be evaluated and placed into an appropriate educational program.

Effective strategies:

- The HRA should ensure that children with handicapping conditions (including preschoolers), are placed according to their educational needs. They should be prioritized for stable shelter placements in their former community so that educational disruption is minimized.
- HRA should ensure that homeless preschoolers with suspected handicapping conditions are identified during the health screening, and referred to the school district CPSE and the relevant district coordinator.
- Available handouts, such as the SED's pamphlet "Special Education for your Preschool Child" (Appendix D), should be distributed to all homeless families as they receive emergency shelter placements.
- BOE intake workers should be required to routinely ask parents if any of their preschool children have a physical or learning problem. When parents determine that there may be a need for preschool special educational services, they should be referred to the CPSE or the Early Childhood Direction Center in the area. Transportation costs should be paid for by the BOE.

FINDING 11: High school students are routinely denied assistance to transfer into local schools, or continue attending their current school.

According to the BOE, High School Memorandum #43, October 23, 1989, "***The Division of High Schools, through the High School Superintendent's offices and individual high schools, is involved in an expanded program of services to students who reside in temporary housing.***" It also clarifies the responsibilities of those involved with homeless high school students:

> "***High School Superintendents have responsibility for students attending their high schools, whether or not they live within the district.... The final responsibility for all attendance and educational functions for students in temporary housing remains with the High School Division.***"
>
> "***The district coordinator, located in the community school district, has overall responsibility for coordinating services for students residing in temporary housing, including those students who attend high schools.***"

Despite these clarifications, there appears to be great ambiguity regarding who is

responsible for ensuring continuity of education for homeless high school students.[17] Some especially troubling responses to our inquiry about services provided by community school district coordinators to high school students are presented below:

> *"I have no idea how many high school students are in our shelters. We don't keep track of high school students."*
>
> *"They are not under my jurisdiction."*
>
> *"Our program is not funded to serve high school students. I try to stay out of it. I'm not responsible for getting them into school. That's entirely up to them. I was instructed not to handle them."*
>
> *"We don't deal with them. We are not required to."*

Only 7 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed knew how many homeless high school students they had living in their school district.[18] These findings, and discrepancies in figures obtained by the HRA and the BOE, confirm our suspicions that homeless high school students are not being identified by the BOE, and consequently are not receiving any of the supplemental services that may be available. For example, on January 4, 1990, there were 3,731 homeless families in NYC, including 496 high school students (personal communication from Bonnie Gross, Central Board). On March 1, 1991 there were 4,244 homeless families in NYC, yet, there were only 321 high school students --including 15% who were long term absentees (New York City Board of Education, 1991). However, data received from the HRA Crisis Intervention Services indicate that there were 720 children between the ages of 14 and 18 (excluding head of households) on March 9, 1991. Clearly, some clarification is needed here.

Most district coordinators provide intake services to high school students, in accordance with Special Circular #43. However, we found the scope of the intakes to be

---

[17] We will return to a discussion of attendance services in a later section.

[18] This question did not apply to three districts, because shelters located in those districts do not accept children of high school age.

quite disturbing. For example, when students want to continue attending their current schools, many districts do not intervene. Consequently, schools are not informed of any change in the child's address, unless the student brings it to their attention.

> *"If children want to continue to attend their current school, we don't do anything."*

Other districts, albeit rarely, were extremely efficient and had exemplary procedures in place. For example, they would call the school and tell the school secretary where the child is currently living, and provide the school with the name of a person to contact at the shelter site, or the district office, if there are any problems. Some districts do even more. For example, they follow up the telephone call with a letter informing them of the change of address, and a request for transportation passes to be arranged.

Finally, some students who continue to attend their current schools must overcome other barriers to continue attending their current school. One district coordinator summarized the issues in the following statement:

> *"Residency requirements are a problem with the high school students. The High School Division is obviously not aware of the educational rights of homeless students. If children want to stay in their current school, and the school finds out that they are homeless, principals need to be told that they cannot discharge them because they no longer live in their catchment ares. They also need to be reminded that homeless children have the right to expedited transportation, and attendance monitoring."*

Special Circular #43 also provides a detailed policy for students who need to transfer into local high schools, either because they want to, or because their shelter placement prevents them travelling lengthy distances:

> *"In each situation involving a request for transfer, the district coordinator should contact the Office of High School Admissions.... which will, in turn, investigate each situation and confirm a high school placement for the student with the new receiving school.... The request for a student's records from the previous school should be made by the receiving school, which may ask that permanent records be faxed for expediency in getting the student registered."*

Most district coordinators, however, were either not aware of this policy, or did not

comply. In some cases, we were told:

> *"If they want to transfer into the area, I point them in the direction of the local high school."*
>
> *"We give them the address of high school placement."*

In other cases, students wishing to transfer are sent to their local school which cannot help them with the process, and instead directs them to the High School Superintendent's office in their borough. In most cases, the Superintendent's office will locate a placement through the Office of High School Admissions. However, because of the high school admission process, the full range of educational options and placements is not available in the middle of the academic year (i.e., schools and programs are full). The Superintendent's office will instead, find a placement in a local school, and subsequently issue the student a letter of admission.

In some cases, children have experienced additional obstacles, even when they have their letter of admission in hand. Some schools will not register children until they are discharged from their former school and the records have arrived. Sometimes, the family is sent back to the former school to get these papers. However, many schools will not give discharge papers, since they are technically not supposed to discharge students until they have been registered at another school. Furthermore, discharge papers are not required to be admitted into school. One district coordinator described some of the problems confronting students who want to transfer into local high schools:

> *"It is extremely difficult to get them into local schools. They do not want homeless students in their schools. They shrug off their responsibilities and tell us that they already have too many homeless children in their school. For teens who are pregnant or parenting, placements are even more difficult. The programs in the area are often full. The high school placement procedure is another barrier. Their system is deplorable. They are not responsible to anyone -- either central or the school boards."*

Another described some other obstacles:

"It is difficult to communicate with high school placement, and the high schools will not return our calls. They do not communicate with us. We have an adversarial role. We care about the kids, they don't want to be bothered. We need a list of who to contact, and a person who is willing to work with us at each school. A central liaison person in the High School Division must also be established."

Finally, NYC has approximately 13,000 births to teenage mothers every year. To meet this growing need, the BOE operates 22 Living for the Young Family through Education (LYFE) programs that provide day care, parent training, and support services. Since, there are only 435 day care slots in the schools (City of New York, 1990), homeless teenagers are often unable to access these services.

Effective strategies:

- The Central Board must bring all involved parties together to establish liaisons, and facilitate coordination and communication between the High School Division, the Office of High Schools Admissions, each Superintendent's office, and each high school's attendance coordinator.

- The High School Division's policies and procedures must be distributed to district coordinators, on-site shelter personnel, and all appropriate people in the High School Division. The High School Division must be held accountable to ensure that these policies are enforced.

- The High School Division must appoint a coordinator of services. In addition, one person within each high school superintendency must be appointed who will be responsible for students who are sheltered and/or attending schools in their area.

- High school principals need to be informed of the legal rights of homeless children, to ensure that no student is denied educational services because of residency requirements.

- The High School Division should standardize the intake procedures for all high school students, and community school districts should be held accountable for providing intake services. For children who want to continue attending their current school, a change of address form should routinely be sent to the high school superintendent's office in the appropriate borough, as well as to the child's school. Both should be provided with the name and phone number of the on-site person and district coordinator. In addition, a request for transportation should be requested by telephone.

- The Central Board and the HRA should work together to clarify ambiguities regarding the number of homeless high school students, and ensure that all students residing in emergency shelter facilities are identified.

- The Adolescent Pregnancy Interagency Council's Pregnant and Parenting Teen's Committee 1989 pamphlet entitled "A Guide to Resources for Homeless Pregnant and Parenting Teenagers" should be updated by the Mayor's Office and made available to all shelter directors, and school personnel who work with homeless teenagers. It should also be available at income maintenance centers and emergency assistance units.

- The NYC Mayor's Office of Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting report entitled "Teenage

Pregnancy and Parent Services: A Guide to New York City Municipal Agencies" should be made available to all district coordinators, and other interested shelter staff.

FINDING 12: Outreach and intake services are not provided to homeless families in domestic violence programs operated by HRA's Domestic Violence Unit.

For many women and children who are victims of domestic violence, their escape involves a loss of their home and entry into the emergency shelter system. For some, their entry into the system is delayed by a temporary stay in a domestic violence shelter where they may stay for a maximum period of 90 days. During FY89, 2,923 people from 1,100 families were sheltered by the HRA's Domestic Violence Unit.[19]

The HRA's domestic violence unit operates 11 programs in NYC to meet the needs of families who have experienced domestic violence. The BOE, however, provides neither outreach nor intake services to families at these facilities, [20] claiming that "***we are not permitted to include students residing in domestic violence shelters. The women and children do not want their identities or whereabouts known***" (personal communication from Francine Goldstein, Director, Office of Student Support Services, June 6, 1991). However, children residing in domestic violence shelters are protected by the McKinney Act and ought not to be denied services, however complicated the provision of such services might be.

Effective Strategies:

- The Central Board must identify domestic violence shelters, and provide district coordinators with an accurate list of shelters, contact personnel, and phone numbers.
- Intake and other services must be provided to families in HRA's Domestic Violence Programs.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, timely school placement in local schools or continuity of education

[19] During the same year, more than 3,000 families with children were turned away because of a lack of available space. These families often had no other alternative but to go directly into the emergency shelter system.

[20] One district coordinator also provides the same services provided to homeless families to families at the domestic violence shelter in his district, even though he is not required to do so.

at current schools is not a major barrier for the majority of NYC's homeless students. Most districts have exemplary models in place to successfully identify children as they are placed in emergency shelter facilities. These models are facilitated by successful outreach services, and interagency coordination and communication. In some districts, however, there is a definite need for improvement. The Central Board should recognize and document existing working models of intake procedures, data maintenance, and coordination, and facilitate a process for sharing these strategies with those districts where improvements are needed.

Quite disturbing, however, were our findings that transportation problems continue to keep children out of school, and that certain groups of homeless children are routinely being denied any services to either enter school, or maintain their current placements. These include children who are eligible for kindergarten, preschoolers, preschoolers with handicapping conditions, and children in domestic violence shelters.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BARRIERS TO APPROPRIATE SCHOOL PLACEMENTS

As with housed children, many homeless children have educational needs requiring special services. For example, there were 60 children with severe handicapping conditions in emergency shelter facilities in NYC in February 1990, currently attending school (New York City Board of Education, 1991). Emergency facilities also shelter larger numbers of children with less severe handicapping conditions who are educated in less restrictive environments, and children who require bilingual services or other remedial support services to overcome academic problems. Thus, it is not enough to simply place children in school in a timely manner, they must also be appropriately placed. In this section, we focus both on where children are placed in school, and on their program placements within the school. Our major findings are:

- Overcrowding and district policies prevent homeless students from being placed in their zoned schools. In most cases, children are distributed among a variety of schools in the district.

- Delays in the transfer of school records prevent students from being placed in appropriate classroom settings.

We also identified some problems for specific groups of homeless children, including:

- Children requiring special education services often wait in regular education classes, or at the shelter, until appropriate placements and transportation are arranged.

- For children from outside NYC, the untimely transfer of records is especially problematic.

- Children who need bilingual services often do not receive them, or instead receive ESL services.

- Children in domestic violence shelters have special placement needs, which are often not met.

FINDING 1: Overcrowding and district policies prevent homeless students from being placed in their zoned schools. In most cases, children are distributed among a variety of schools in the district.

Chancellor's Regulation A-780 states that homeless students who transfer into schools in the community school district where their emergency shelter is located, shall be placed in the school to which the emergency shelter is zoned. However, only 7 of the 22 districts surveyed actually place homeless children in their zoned schools. The remainder (15 districts) distribute students among a variety of district schools. Overall, elementary school-age children are less likely to be placed in their zoned schools than are junior high school students.

The major reason given for being unable to place homeless students in their zoned schools was overcrowding. In some cases, the entire school is filled to capacity. In other cases, only select grades have been capped. In addition, four district coordinators indicated that their superintendents had informed them to evenly distribute homeless children throughout district schools.

The practice of sending children to schools other than the school zoned for their particular shelter or hotel, and often a greater distance from the shelter, is having a negative impact on the children involved, as well as on their parents. In some cases, actual school bus transportation is provided. In other cases, children must rely on public transportation. This is especially problematic for younger children who are not yet able to negotiate the public transportation system on their own. In addition, while some school districts try to maintain siblings in the same school building, others do not -- placing an additional burden on the children and their parents.

Effective strategies:

- Community school districts should be prohibited from using their own discretion regarding school placement policies. Children should be placed in their zoned schools.
- Districts need to rezone if they feel that there is undue burden on select schools. When

schools are overcrowded, they must be required to rezone.

FINDING 2: Delays in the transfer of school records prevent students from being placed in appropriate classroom settings.

Every district coordinator interviewed cited delays in the transfer of records as having a negative impact on their ability to place children according to their educational needs and legal entitlements. The frustrations described by each of the district coordinators interviewed is exemplified in the following statement:

> ***"The system is impossible. Sometimes, pupil accounting secretaries at the schools do not request the records for weeks on end. Then, we're at the mercy of the sending school district, which often does not efficiently comply with requests. Sometimes, records have to be requested over and over again. The entire process can take up to three months on some occasions."***

The process is even more disheartening for children who have been bounced between different shelters and schools.

> ***"In some cases, they never arrive -- they have gotten lost in the shuffle -- the child's former school may not have them, because they never arrived there from the previous school. Sometimes, by the time they arrive, the children have been bounced to a different shelter, and is no longer in our district schools. We have no idea where the child has gone, so the records just sit here until somebody requests them. Some schools never request the records, so they just sit here. Then we have to find out where the kid is. It is a runaround for the attendance teacher trying to track them down."***

Without school records, children often do not receive the services to which they are entitled. In some cases, children are simply placed in their assigned grade without receiving the educational services to which they are entitled. In other cases, children are placed in improper programs until their records arrive. This affects Chapter 1 services, and access to other remedial, bilingual and special education programs. Special problems exist for children who were in the process of being evaluated for special education in their prior school district.

District coordinators provided some ways of coping with these delays. In some cases, the family assistant, or school secretary, calls the former school and inquires about

grade placement, immunizations, test scores, and if the child was receiving any special services, such as remedial assistance, special education, or bilingual services. This enables the new school to place the child in an appropriate setting. Once this is accomplished, the school formally requests the records. Other districts conduct an informal academic assessment at the point of entry to determine what, if any, remedial services are required. Some schools actually require the parent to return to the former school to pick up copies of the records.

When records simply cannot be located, school districts are sometimes able to obtain placement information from the Office of Educational Data Services (OEDS) Biofile. Many coordinators, however, indicated that these systems are notoriously poor, and often do not contain current information. Part of the problem is that the information collected by family assistants during the intake process is no longer being input into the Biofile. Instead, this responsibility has been turned over to the schools.

Effective strategies:

- As long as families are bounced from shelter to shelter and children must transfer from school to school, there is going to be a problem with the timely transfer of records. Therefore, the best strategy of all is for the HRA to stop bouncing families from one emergency shelter to another.

- Receiving schools should fax the request for records to former schools, and the sending school should fax the records back the same day. If schools do not have a fax machine, the district office should assist in this process.

- Access to computerized biofile information would substantially assist district personnel with proper placements, especially if they were kept accurate and up to date. On-line computer linkage should be provided to districts and schools.[21]

- Until an adequate procedure is in place to ensure the timely transfer of school records, parents should be provided with a fact sheet of basic information (e.g., student identification number, test information, immunization data, and special needs).

---

[21] For example, when a child moves to a shelter in a different school district, the former district coordinator could send the relevant information including family composition, names and ages of the children, and school and grade placement information for each child. If the child enters a different school, the district coordinator in the area where the child is now sheltered, who is responsible for monitoring the child's school attendance, would update the file with current school information. If the child continues to attend the former school, the district coordinator in that area, who is then responsible, would update his/her files with the change of address.

ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS FOR SPECIFIC GROUPS

Certain groups of students confront additional obstacles in their attempts to access appropriate school placement. These include: children requiring special education services; children from outside NYC; children requiring bilingual services; and children in domestic violence shelters.

FINDING 3: Children requiring special education services often wait in regular education classes, or at the shelter, until appropriate placements and transportation are arranged.

In NYC, responsibility for educating children with handicapping conditions lies within each community school district. Each district has a committee on special education (CSE) which oversees the evaluation and placement of these children. However, when children are hard of hearing, visually impaired, or have severe emotional and social needs, the district CSE must request placements from Central's Division of Special Education, Office of "Citywide" Programs.

Our overall findings with regard to appropriate placements for children with handicapping conditions are exemplified in the following comment made by one of our interviewees.

> *"Special education is almost scandalous in the way it is run. There is no system in place. No one seems to know the procedure."*

Like other homeless children, children with handicapping conditions may either transfer into local schools or continue attending their current schools. For children with severe handicapping conditions (e.g., hard of hearing), the scarcity of seats in appropriate programs (especially in the middle of the academic year), often leaves them with no other option but to continue attending their current school. For children who require actual bus transportation to school, this can be a serious obstacle, especially for children who are sheltered in one borough and attend school in another. In some cases, interborough

transportation has been flatly denied.

> ***"A while ago, a multiply handicapped child moved into one of our shelters. Because the shelter is so far from the child's school, the mother wanted her transferred into a closer program. But, there was no available seat in the appropriate program, so transferring her was out of the question. The CSE tried to arrange transportation for the child to continue attending her current school, but was told that there was no way they could provide transportation to a school in a different borough. The mother ended up leaving her child with her sister who lived closer to the child's school. That was the only way that child could continue to attend school."***

For some children, especially those with less severe handicapping conditions, parents elect to have them transferred into local schools. However, 15 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed indicated that the appropriate placement of students requiring special education services is a problem when students need to be transferred into local schools. The most frequently cited obstacle was the untimely transfer of the child's individualized education plan (IEP) and other pertinent records.

> ***"It can take weeks before the children are placed in an appropriate programs. In the meantime, they are temporarily placed in regular education classes. If their condition is very serious, they have to stay at the shelter."***

> ***"We contact our CSE and tell them that we need placement for a child requiring special education services. Our CSE then contacts the CSE in the district where the child last attended school, and requests the IEP. There is usually a substantial elapse of time here.[22] Often, pertinent information is missing from the file, or the entire file is missing. If the CSE would immediately get the records faxed to their office, it would take about 1-2 weeks off the delay."***

Once their IEP arrives at the CSE, a proper placement has to be found -- a process that can take 3-4 weeks, depending on the nature of the handicapping condition. The consequences for the children involved are often devastating. For example, children requiring resource room instruction often do not receive the required services until an opening occurs in the appropriate program; children are placed in regular classes or in other inappropriate programs; children must travel long distance to available programs; and

---

[22] Some districts actually require the parent to go to the former CSE and pick up the IEP to save time. They tell the parents that if they do not comply, it will take the CSE 2-3 weeks to get to it.

in some cases, wait at the shelter until a placement is found.

> *"In one case a while back, we had to send the mother back to the CSE for a complete reevaluation -- we had room in a different program and could get the child in there."*

> *"Sometimes, and especially for children who are deaf or blind, we never succeed in finding a placement."*

> *"Our CSE had 37 children with serious emotional and social needs on a waiting list for placement. What do we do with the homeless child who moves into a shelter here who is unable to continue attending their former placement because of the distance. They should be prioritized for placement."*

> *"Homeless children should get priority treatment from CSEs. They are spending an inordinate amount of time out of school. The only real solution is to place the family in a shelter in the same borough as the child's school."*

Once placement is arranged, the CSE must arrange for transportation for children who cannot travel on their own. This was identified as a major obstacle by 14 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed.

> *"Placing a child on the bus route can take another ten days, and sometimes three weeks. Even then, the buses don't always come on time."*

Clearly, for many families, the process is discouraging, and should be simplified. In districts where special education issues were not identified as being problematic, district coordinators or family assistants had a personal contact with the placement officer at the CSE, whom they would personally call and provide the child's name, date of birth, and previous school placement. This placement officer would then call the placement officer in the child's former school district, and discuss the child's needs over the telephone. The IEP and other records would immediately be faxed to the new CSE.

Effective strategies:

- Families with children in special education programs should receive stable emergency shelter placements in the same borough as their prior permanent home.
- The Central Board must establish a system for coordination and communication between the Division of Special Education, CSE Placement Officers, District Administrators of Special Education, District Coordinators, and on-site BOE personnel.
- The Central Board should provide all district coordinators and family assistants with an

updated list of each district placement officer, and each district administrator of special education.

- o CSE's must develop a review and standardization of the transfer procedures to ensure that homeless children are transferred with minimum interruption of educational service. Records and other pertinent placement information should be faxed.

- o Each CSE's placement officer should be linked to each on-site person at each shelter facility, and to each district coordinator. This must be done on a policy, and not on an individual level.

- o The office of pupil transportation should be required to ensure that transportation is immediately arranged. In no case should transportation be denied, regardless of the distance or borough involved.

- o Monthly reports should be issued to district coordinators, advocates, and other interested parties, outlining the number of homeless children who are currently awaiting placement, and the length of time recent placements took to secure.

- o Under no circumstances should children be required to wait at the shelter.

- o Families moving into permanent housing should be provided with the necessary information to facilitate prompt placement in appropriate programs in their new districts, unless the parent chooses to continue attendance at the previous school.

- o School secretaries should compile a list of all new homeless students and transmit this information to the district Committee on Special Education (CSE), which could check student identification numbers against the Child Assistance Program (CAP) database. This would identify any new entrant with a special education placement or in the process of being evaluated, and also speed up appropriate placements for children in special education classes. It would also prevent loss of time and possible duplication of effort in completing an initial evaluation.

FINDING 4: For children from outside NYC, the untimely transfer of records is especially problematic.

Several district coordinators identified the untimely transfer of academic and health records as a major obstacle to placement of children who previously attended school outside of NYC into appropriate classroom settings. Especially problematic is the transfer of records from Puerto Rico and the West Indies. In addition, some superintendents do not permit long distance calls which means that appropriate placements cannot be made until the records actually arrive.

When health records cannot be located, children may be reimmunized. But, children who previously attended school outside NYC, as well as children from NYC who are entering school for the first time, are not allowed to register without proof of birth (e.g.,

birth certificate, baptismal certificate, passport). Frequently, these items are lost or left behind as families move. The time required to acquire replacements is frequently time that homeless children remain unenrolled.

Effective strategies.

- o Liaisons must be developed, and communication established between coordinators for educating homeless children and youth in other states, and especially Puerto Rico.
- o Schools should be required to call each child's former school and get test scores and verification of immunization over the telephone, regardless of the distance involved.
- o According to New York State Education Law, Section 3212, 3218, principals may place children in school pending proof of age. Principals should be required to admit all homeless children to school, while proof of birth is being verified.

FINDING 5: Children who need bilingual services often do not receive them, or instead receive ESL services.

Limited English proficient students in need of bilingual or ESL placements are particularly disadvantaged by the absence of records and resultant delays in appropriate placements and services. Children who previously received bilingual services in their prior school are often not identified until their records arrive. In addition, some districts have a shortage of bilingual programs. When this occurs, children are referred to programs in another school district, placed in available ESL programs, or do not receive the services to which they are entitled.

Effective strategies:

- o Provisions must be made to ensure that children are promptly assessed to determine their level of English proficiency.
- o If children are eligible for services provided to LEP students, such services must be promptly provided.
- o If districts do not have sufficient places for children requiring bilingual services, more programs need to be established. ESL is not an appropriate substitution for bilingual programs.

FINDING 6: Children in domestic violence shelters have special placement needs, which are often not met.

As previously mentioned, community school district coordinators for the education

of homeless children and youth are not required by the BOE to provide educational outreach services to children in domestic violence shelters. This is especially unfortunate since children who have witnessed or personally experienced domestic violence have special placement needs. First, they are often required to transfer into local schools for safety reasons. Thus, they confront the same problems with the transfer of records as other homeless children. However, these children need to have special attention paid to their school records. In some cases, the violent parent can locate the family by contacting the child's previous school and finding out where copies of records have been sent. Unless the parent's rights have been terminated, school districts are compelled by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act to comply with the parent's request for information.

Effective strategies:

- At the time of enrollment, schools must find out who can and who cannot pick up the child from school. Schools must use extreme caution in working with students who are fleeing domestic violence.
- Pupil personnel secretaries must inform domestic violence shelter directors when a violent parent tries to locate the family by requesting information on where copies of records have been sent.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, being placed in appropriate school placements according to their educational needs and legal entitlements is a major problem for homeless children in NYC. This occurs primarily because students are not being placed in their zoned schools as a result of overcrowding and other district policies that are not only contrary to the McKinney Act, but also to New York State and City regulations. In addition, the untimely transfer of records is having a significant negative impact on the ability of school districts to place students in appropriate classroom settings. Consequently, many children do not receive the remedial and other services to which they are entitled.

While record delays impact negatively on all homeless students, it is particularly

disruptive for children requiring special education services, who often must wait in regular education classes, or at the shelter, until appropriate placements and transportation are arranged. In addition, students requiring bilingual or ESL services are often not being identified until their records arrive. Records take even longer to receive for children from outside NYC, and especially from Puerto Rico and the West Indies. Finally, students residing in domestic violence shelters, in addition to confronting the same problems with the transfer of records as other homeless children, need to have special attention paid to their records to prevent abusive parents from locating their whereabouts. This is currently not being done.

CHAPTER NINE

BARRIERS TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

When children do not attend school, they cannot succeed academically. However, even when homeless children are enrolled in school and receiving appropriate educational services, they are often confronted with a variety of ancillary problems that impact on their ability to learn and participate in school life. In this chapter, we discuss the obstacles to school attendance and academic performance identified and described by district coordinators and other people interviewed for this project. We also offer some effective strategies that would overcome the specified barriers and facilitate school attendance and academic achievement.

- Disruptions in educational services resulting from multiple moves between schools;
- Educator insensitivity to the needs of homeless children and youth;
- Barriers to parental involvement in the education of their children;
- Lack of interagency communication and coordination.
- Difficulties obtaining school clothes and supplies;
- Disruptive and unstable emergency shelter placements, and high mobility from one shelter to another;
- Inadequate conditions in emergency shelter facilities;
- Emotional problems and adjustments resulting from the loss of a home, living in emergency shelters, and frequent school transitions;
- Unmet medical, dental, and other health needs; and
- Family stress.

FINDING 1: Disruptions in educational services resulting from multiple moves between schools.

Research on children who move from one permanent home to another indicates that even when the move is planned and children are prepared for the subsequent disruption, the transition is stressful. This research also indicates that high rates of school mobility are associated with poor attendance and academic failure, particularly for elementary and minority students (Felner, Primavera, & Cauce, 1981; Levine, Wesolowski, & Corbett, 1966), and lower self esteem for adolescents (Peterson & Crockett, 1985).

For children who are homeless, the move from one's permanent home tends to be more sudden, more unexpected, and therefore more traumatic and stressful -- the family is suddenly thrust outside of its own community, support systems, schools, and friends. The dislocation of children from their communities, and the subsequent bouncing between emergency shelters, result in time away from school, and lack of instructional continuity resulting from movement between schools. Many of these students may have performed well in school prior to becoming homeless.

In NYC, unstable shelter placements translate into a high rate of transiency among homeless children. Among 390 homeless students residing in emergency shelters in NYC (Rafferty & Rollins, 1989), 76% had transferred schools at least once; 33% had transferred between two and six times. On average, children missed five days of school with each move to a different shelter, and 20% missed ten or more days with each move.[23] Unstable shelter placements are also associated with disrupted educational services among homeless students in Los Angeles. A survey of 142 shelter providers in California identified family moves from one shelter to another as being one of the most significant obstacles confronting homeless children's ability to receive a continuous and stable education

[23] Factors associated with school transfers, in addition to unstable shelter placements included age, distance between emergency shelter facilities and school, parents' knowledge of educational rights of their children, and lack of transportation.

(California State Department of Education, 1989). The U. S. Department of Education (1990) also found that homeless children nationwide get discouraged by frequent school changes.

When children move from school to school, they lose their friends and have to try to make new ones. At the same time, they have to get used to a new school, new teacher, and new school work that is often discontinuous with the work they were doing before. For homeless children, moving two, three, and sometimes four times in one year, is devastating -- emotionally and academically. The constant transfers make it almost impossible for them to succeed.

> "***The importance of continuity in an educational program for the homeless child has been recognized by states' school personnel, shelter providers, and policy makers. Maintaining attendance in one school throughout the year, even though the family may have left the school district, can be a stabilizer during a time for transition for a child without a permanent residence***" (Bowen et al., 1990, p.20).

Constant transfers also make it more difficult for schools to provide meaningful services. The way schools are organized assumes continuity. When rosters change from week to week, continuity of instruction is virtually impossible. Furthermore, when children remain in a school for only a short period of time, it becomes difficult to provide any educational service of lasting value, or to begin to repair the damage done by the combination of instability, homelessness, and poverty. Classroom teachers do not have adequate time to identify and appropriately respond to the specific academic deficits of homeless children before they move. By the time their deficits are identified and services are arranged, they have moved to a different school.

Finally, some homeless students who qualify for special services such as Chapter 1, special education, or gifted and talented programs, are unable to access such services because their transience results in them not being evaluated. Chancellor's Regulation A-831, for example, requires schools to make and document efforts to remediate deficits

before a special education evaluation is pursued. Any sincere effort in this regard takes time to implement and determine its effectiveness in remediating the student's deficits. However, many children's stay in school is shorter than the length of time involved in developing, implementing, and evaluating interventions. Further, districts are required to complete an evaluation of the student within 30 days of the parent's consent. In some cases, the children are moved prior to the completion of an evaluation.

Effective strategies:

- Emergency shelter referrals must be made in light of the community ties and educational needs of the children in the family, in accordance with the State Department of Social Services 88-ADM-41.
- Continuity of educational services, and a decrease in movements between shelters should be the focus of a working group between the SED, the DSS, and the HRA. The SED must take a leadership role here.
- Schools should develop a buddy system for new students. Have a student assume the responsibility of providing a tour of the building for all new students, and introductions to other students at the school.
- Community school districts should recruit volunteers for tutoring students at their shelters and hotels.

FINDING 2: Educator insensitivity to the needs of homeless children and youth.

Without an awareness and understanding of the physical deprivations and emotional devastation associated with homelessness, as well as sensitivity to the needs of homeless children, school personnel may unintentionally add to the trauma experienced by homeless children. Sixteen (16) of the 22 district coordinators interviewed identified the lack of sensitivity from some school personnel as a major contributor to the negative impact that homelessness is having on the children attending schools in their district. In each case, the recommendation was to provide school personnel with training programs to help them understand and empathize with the unique problems and stressors confronting homeless children.

> ***"School personnel are not sensitive to how homeless children feel about being without their own home and living in emergency shelter facilities. When I go to the schools, I often hear the children being referred to as "those kids" or "the***

homeless kids." They need to be better informed of the stressors children are under, and how they ought to be treated."

Homeless children, like all children, need to be accepted by others. Yet, homeless children frequently confront stigmatization, insensitivity, and rejection by classmates and teachers (Eddowes & Hranitz, 1989). Children get hurt when exposed to discriminating remarks of classmates and teachers (Nann, 1982). One 12 year old child who was living at the Prince George hotel wrote:

> ***"People in school call me a hotel kid. I don't think it's because they don't like me. I just think that they are afraid that if I am the same as them and I am a hotel kid, then something could happen beyond their control leaving them homeless. They have no right to punish me for something I have no control over. I'm just a little boy, living in a hotel, petrified, wanting to know what's going to happen to me. I am not a hotel kid. I am a child who lives in a hotel"*** (New York Times, 9/30/90, page E5).

The experience of being stigmatized often translates into children being too embarrassed or discouraged to attend school. The provision of training and assistance in understanding the problems created by homelessness, and the psychological development of children and how it is affected by homelessness would equip educational personnel to respond to the needs of homeless children. Gewirtzman & Fodor (1987) provide some useful strategies to be used with homeless elementary school-age children in the classroom. Molnar, Bittel, Hartman, & Klein (1989) focus on preschoolers. In addition, the National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (1991a) describe true stories about homeless students in 14 different states, and the efforts made by public school personnel to address identified problems.

Some school districts have made an excellent effort to increase school personnel's awareness of issues related to children who are homeless. Children attending these schools are therefore more likely to feel accepted and understood. Unfortunately, the majority of districts do not provide such training.

While pupil personnel secretaries, who are responsible for the school registration of children, were identified as the group most in need of training, school teachers, bus drivers, attendance teachers, attendance support staff, administrators, and principals were also often mentioned as needing improvement in their manner of dealing with homeless families and their children. Social workers and guidance counselors were not identified as in need of additional training. In fact, the only comment made with regard to these workers was that there are not enough to adequately serve so many needy children.

Suggestions for topics to be included in training sessions included: (a) the educational rights of homeless children; (b) the impact of homelessness on children; (c) why families are homeless; (d) the realities of shelter life; (e) the educational needs of homeless children, (f) the impact of stigma and trauma resulting from being referred to as "shelter kids" or "hotel children;" and (g) the importance of making parents and children feel welcome at the school.

School principals were singled out as most in need of workshops on the educational rights of homeless children, with special attention being paid to the McKinney Act. It was pointed out that principals are sometimes reluctant to keep homeless children in their schools, once they move into a shelter or permanent housing in a different district. Familiarity with the educational provisions of the McKinney Act would provide them with a legal basis for not discharging children when they move from district shelters, and relieve district coordinators and advocates from ensuring compliance with this right. It was suggested that if principals had a better understanding of the laws protecting homeless children, and the reasons why such laws were implemented in the first place, their attitudes would improve. It was also suggested that since principals influence both staff attitudes and the school environment, focusing on these individuals would actually have a much broader impact.

While periodic workshops were identified most frequently as the best way to sensitize school personnel to the needs of homeless children, many district coordinators suggested that actual visits to some shelter sites, and discussions with some homeless parents, might also be beneficial to ensuring a better understanding of what homelessness is all about. Other suggestions included: (a) discussion at principals' faculty conferences; (b) distribution of available literature on homeless children; (c) a videotape which provides an overview of a day in the life of homeless school-age children; and (d) regular meetings with shelter staff and school personnel.

Effective strategies:

- Staff development should be provided to all school personnel who come in contact with homeless children. Staff development should have three major functions: (1) increasing awareness of the issues surrounding homelessness; (2) improving staff sensitivity to homeless students; and (3) increasing their knowledge of the educational rights of homeless children and youth.

- Increased awareness of the issues surrounding homelessness could be accomplished by providing staff with a series of training programs which includes basic information about where homeless children are living, the conditions under which they are living, the impact of homelessness, and the effects of mobility and homelessness on education. Suggestions should also be provided on what schools can do to address those needs. Shelter directors could also be contacted and requests made to allow school personnel to visit the facility.

- Training programs should include a videotape presentation concerning the physical, emotional, and educational needs of homeless children and youth. Districts should be required to share this video presentation with their school boards, teachers, and other administrative staff.

- Available literature on the educational needs of homeless children should be distributed to all school district personnel who are involved with homeless children (e.g., Advocates for Children's report entitled "Learning in Limbo").

- Improved sensitivity could be accomplished through in-service training sessions, which include role-playing so that staff can understand the impact of mobility, and develop strategies for working with students and their families as individuals, without stereotypes.

- A videotape program with associated staff development materials, such as "No Time to Lose," distributed by the DSS, should be used as a vehicle for developing staff's understanding of issues surrounding homelessness. This program features interviews with at-risk children, and communicates effectively their potential and promise, as well as their vulnerability. It is also useful in developing sensitivity.

- Schools should develop a congenial, warm, stable, consistent, and positive environment in which homeless children feel accepted and understood. Available literature on homeless students, such as "Strategies for Inclusion: Suggestions for helping school children who move often and who have limited resources" developed by the New Hampshire Department of Education, or "Homeless Children: Effective Outreach for School Teams," distributed by the

Philadelphia BOE should be disseminated to all school staff.

- Preschool teachers should also receive available literature on the special needs of homeless preschoolers (e.g., Dr. Janice Molnar's paper "Curriculum Consideration for Optimally Supporting the Needs of Homeless Children in Early Childhood Programs").

- Increased knowledge of the educational rights of homeless children and youth could be accomplished by providing all school district personnel with a copy of the McKinney Amendments of 1990, which outline local school district's responsibilities for educating homeless children and youth. In addition, trainings should be provided on the educational rights of homeless children and youth. Presentations should also be made on policies and procedures pertaining to preschool and high school students.

- When parents are registering their children in school, school secretaries should be aware that the parent and child may be embarrassed about being homeless, and cautioned not to bring undue attention to the fact that the family is living in an emergency shelter.

- The SED should serve as an information clearinghouse in order to increase educators' awareness of, and sensitivity to, the issues surrounding homelessness and the effects homelessness has on children and youth. Pamphlets should be printed and distributed that focus on pertinent issues and target excellent practices (e.g., nutritional needs, primary health and mental health care, importance of early intervention and kindergarten, etc.).

- The Central Board should disseminate information on successful practices and encourage the adoption of promising and innovative education techniques by community school districts. Community school districts with exemplary programs should be asked to facilitate training programs for other community school districts.

FINDING 3: Barriers to parental involvement in the education of their children.

Parents are a valuable resource for assisting in the education of their children. Active parent participation significantly enhances school attendance, self-esteem, academic achievement, social behavior, and attitudes and expectations toward school (cf. Comer, 1984; Henderson, 1988; National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1991). These findings hold true for children and parents in every social and economic class. Furthermore, children whose background places them "at risk" of failing or falling behind will overcome their high risk status if their parents are given training in home teaching techniques (cf. Henderson, 1988).

Despite the abundance of evidence supporting parent involvement, parents continue to be an untapped resource in NYC. In fact, only rarely do schools provide outreach services to involve parents of homeless students in the education of their children. Overall, 18 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed reported that the school system could do

more to involve parents in their children's education. Many district coordinators stressed the need for parent involvement programs that include homeless parents. This is especially important for homeless parents of children who are not attending their zoned schools. In these cases, transportation expenses should be provided by the district coordinator in the school district where the shelter is located.

Workshops at the shelter site were also identified as being especially valuable for homeless parents. District coordinators identified some possible workshop topics, including, the educational rights of homeless children and youth; the legal rights of the homeless; special education; parenting skills; nutrition; activities to do with children; requirements for school enrollment; how to help with homework; how to advocate around welfare issues; sexuality; child development; adolescent development; and how to communicate with teachers (e.g. how often, issues to discuss, the report card). Many coordinators, however, pointed out that workshops should be conducted on topics selected by the parents, and not by the school district. Some district coordinators who run excellent programs, actually offer parents a list of potential topics, and then ask parents to choose the topics. Once the agenda is established, arrangements for refreshments and day care are made.

Effective strategies:

- Schools must make every effort to involve and encourage parents to be active participants in their child's education. School staff should be prepared to welcome parents into the school and have personal contact with them before problems arise. They should also collaborate with parents to enhance students' school attendance and academic performance. At all times, staff must be sensitive to the circumstances of the parent.

- School districts should design a parent involvement program around the needs of the family. Workshops should be provided on topics identified by parents. School districts must be careful to include bilingual parents. Information must be available in languages other than English.

- Once every semester, teachers, counsellors, and other knowledgeable personnel should present a workshop for parents at each shelter concerning school policies, and ways parents can help improve their child's success in school.

- The Central Board should develop a series of posters and brochures for distribution and posting in shelters, income maintenance centers, and emergency assistance units outlining the educational rights of homeless children (e.g., children and youth do not have to have a

permanent address to be enrolled in school; children have the right to continue attending their current school or transfer into local schools; transportation; information on how to obtain immunizations and birth certificates).

- The Central Board should make available pamphlets, including "Know Your Rights: Student Records" to each emergency shelter facility for distribution to parents.
- The SED should provide parents with information on the educational rights of homeless children. This information should be disseminated (including languages other than English) through a brochure. The Massachusetts Department of Education's "Keeping Your Children in School" could serve as a model for this brochure.
- The SED should provide shelters with a series of pamphlets to help parents help their children succeed in school. These pamphlets would include, for example, "Getting Ready for School", available from World Book in Chicago.
- School districts should initiate a series of meetings with homeless parents to discuss the educational rights of their children, the education system in general, special education, and how to advocate for educational services.
- A toll-free number should be provided by the SED so that parents can call if they have any questions pertaining to the education of their children.
- Schools should provide referrals to community-based agencies where parents can find assistance with whatever problems they are experiencing.

FINDING 4: Lack of interagency communication and coordination.

Because the educational needs of homeless children are many, and the problems involved in educating homeless children are complex, no agency, school, or school district can solve the problems alone. Consequently, these needs can best be met through support, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration between the various agencies who work with homeless families, as well as communication at the state and local levels. A coordinated model of service delivery would enhance the provision of programs and services to homeless children and their families (cf. Bowen, et al., 1989; 1990; National Association of State Coordinators for Homeless Children and Youth, 1990; New York State Council on Children and Families, 1984; U.S. Department of Education, 1989). For example, according to Harold Reynolds, Jr., Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Education (1989):

> ***"Any educational program which consists of multiple school placements during the course of an academic year is not appropriate and will only serve to impede a child's education and overall development. We must not allow homeless children***

to experience further instability and inconsistencies in their lives by forcing them to move from school to school. The goal of the Department of Education is to ensure that homeless children have the chance to remain in one school, with familiar peers, teachers, and curricula. To accomplish this goal all agencies involved with homeless families must work together with schools and parents to address the issues which keep families locked into a cycle of instability and transiency" (p.iii).

Furthermore, communication between shelter directors and schools is critical to the success of efforts to educate homeless students. Improved communication promotes faster enrollment processes, fewer absences, and better follow-up on behavior, academic, and health concerns. In addition, shelter services are improved when schools share information on how to accommodate student homework needs, health needs, and other needs that impact on the student's success in schools. Similarly, shelters have been able to share with schools information that has helped schools better accommodate the student's emotional, physical, and social needs that impact on the student's success in schools.

Effective strategies:

- The SED should strengthen collaboration between involved state agencies, school districts, community agencies, advocacy groups, and shelter providers to ensure that homeless children have the opportunity to remain in one school during the academic year, receive all of the services to which they are entitled, and that any school transfers cause the least amount of disruption to the child.

- The SED should hold workshops for shelter personnel and social service providers on the educational rights of homeless children, SED's policies and procedures relating to special education and Chapter 1 services, student records, transportation, and other pertinent education issues.

- The SED should create a Directory of Services which contains contact persons for each school district, shelter, social service agencies, and pertinent community-based agencies. This directory should be disseminated to all agencies working with homeless families. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has created a Statewide Resource Directory: Services for Homeless Children and Youth, and Statewide Directory: Local School District Contact Persons, which would serve as excellent models.

- The SED should explore existing collaborations between schools, shelters and social service agencies, and disseminate this information to other schools, shelters and social service agencies. The Pennsylvania Homeless Student Initiatives report, available from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, outlines a series of models for effective coordination between schools and shelters and serves as an excellent model for replication.

- The SED should issue a regular newsletter to all schools and agencies working with homeless families to keep them informed of current issues and provide some useful strategies for problematic issues. The pamphlet series issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education could serve as a model.

- o School staff should provide shelter directors with regular information on school happenings, problems, and concerns.

- o Schools should discuss their homework policies with each shelter director. Ask them to assist by setting aside quiet areas where students can study.

- o The HRA must keep the BOE informed of all shelter and hotel openings. The BOE should provide district coordinators with this information in a timely manner.

FINDING 5: Difficulties obtaining school clothes and supplies.

The acquisition of school clothes and supplies can be a major task for homeless parents who generally have incomes below 70% of the federal poverty line (Community Food Resource Center, 1989). The lack of resources for school supplies and clothing has also been identified as a major barrier to school attendance by the U.S. Department of Education, (1990). Some children are reluctant to attend school if they feel they will be singled out because they do not have the appropriate school supplies, or because their clothing is noticeably atypical. In some cases, their parents are too embarrassed to send them to school.

Every district coordinator interviewed reported that homeless children often indicate that they fear their clothing is inadequate, and that a lack of adequate school clothes and supplies is a major barrier to school attendance and academic performance. Some districts have used Chapter 1 funds, AIDP funds, or other local funds to address these needs. Other district coordinators have worked with community agencies, church groups, and clothing manufacturers to obtain school supplies, clothes and shoes. These supplies, however, are often minimal and do not adequately respond to the need.

Effective strategies:

- o Schools should develop clothing banks using Chapter 1 funds, State Compensatory Education funds, parent/teacher association funds, local community action programs, Salvation Army, church groups and other concerned agencies.

- o Schools should distribute school supplies, including books, notebooks, and pencils to enable children to participate fully in school. Be careful that these supplies are similar to those of the other children to prevent accidentally stigmatizing homeless children. If the supplies are to be provided only to homeless children, it might be best to have the shelter distribute them.

- The Central Board should contact clothing manufacturers and ask them to donate clothing to homeless school-age children to enable them to attend school.
- Contact book publishers and other suppliers of school supplies, who may be willing to donate supplies.
- Schools should develop ways for students to earn additional supplies as awards for good academic work and regular school attendance.

FINDING 6: Disruptive and unstable shelter placements, and high mobility from one shelter to another.

While affordable permanent housing is the fundamental issue of homelessness, it is not the sole need of homeless families with children. One immediate need is for emergency transitional shelter facilities. Yet, few states provide homeless families with a legal right to emergency shelter, and where they do, it has come only as a result of advocates bringing the issue before the courts.

The urgent need for increased involvement in this area is easily illustrated: 21 of 27 recently surveyed cities turn away homeless families because of a lack of resources;[24] 17 report being unable to keep homeless families intact while receiving emergency shelter, requiring families to break themselves up or give their children up to foster care in order to be accommodated; and families are often unable to obtain emergency shelter during daytime hours -- half of the cities surveyed ask families to leave the shelter during the day (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1989).

In addition, emergency shelter placements often separate the mother from her significant other. The trauma of a young pregnant woman identified when she was requesting emergency shelter is exemplified in the following statement (Dehavenon, Benker, & Boone, 1990):

> *"The hardest part is that they try to separate you from your man. He's my only comfort. We don't have any time for friends. I can't leave him outside. He's my whole life. I'm his whole life. That's all we have -- each other"* (p. 62).

---

[24] Birmingham, Alabama, for example, turns away 25% of the families requesting emergency shelter every day (National Coalition for the Homeless, 1989b).

In recent months, some homeless families in NYC have not immediately had their emergency shelter needs met, despite the legal right to shelter in NYC. For example, during some recent visits to the Emergency Assistance Units, where NYC homeless families seek referral to emergency shelters, Advocates for Children heard many families being told, after hours of waiting, that "*the system was full*," and that they should seek shelter with friends or relatives for the night and come back again the following day.

When families successfully obtain emergency shelter, other obstacles prevail. While some hotels have no restrictions on length of stay, others limit placement to less than thirty days. Restricting the amount of time a family can stay prevents occupants from acquiring tenants' rights. These rights would provide legal protection from being evicted. The use of short-stay hotels is a major contributing factor to families being bounced from one hotel to another for months on end. For other families, repeated overnight placements in violation of court orders, often require that they secure shelter on a daily basis. These children and their families have been consigned to sleep in "overnight" areas of congregate shelters in cafeterias, recreation rooms, and hallways. Many are left there to languish amidst filth and mice and roach infestation for several nights at a time -- often without cribs and folding cots for each family member.

Families are also regularly moved between "overnight" shelter placements and short-stay hotels. Under these circumstances, school attendance and maintenance of medical care suffer greatly. Children and parents often literally do not know whether they are coming or going. Incredibly, families placed under these circumstances include pregnant women, newborn infants, and children and adults with severe medical needs and handicapping conditions. Such placements have continued even though there have been recent outbreaks of chicken pox and measles at these very same shelters, and despite court orders against such policies.

The trauma accompanying the loss of one's home is also compounded by dislocation from community, neighbors, services, friends, and schools, resulting from the HRA's non-compliance with the shelter placement requirements as set forth in the New York State Department of Social Services 9/1/88 transmittal No. 88-ADM-41:

> ***"When placing a homeless family into temporary housing, local districts must attempt to place families with school-aged children or soon to be of school-age children into temporary housing in their original school district.... For families with school-aged children who are placed outside of their original school district and who are travelling back to the original school district, local social services districts must attempt to relocate these families into the original district if accommodations become available."***

In addition, "*Part 900 Shelter for Families*" was added to the Official Regulations of the New York State Department of Social Services, Title 18, NYCRR on July 14, 1986. Part 900 sets requirements and standards for Tier I and Tier II shelters, and makes noncompliance with these requirements grounds for denial of reimbursement. Several sections of the Part 900 Regulations require the Commissioner of Social Services to take cognizance of the educational needs of homeless students when shelter placements are being made:

> ***"Such referral must be made to the best available setting, based on the availability of space and the needs of the family as determined by the local social services district. Any referral must be made in light of the community ties and educational needs of the family and the children in the family"*** (Section 7a).

Despite these mandates, families entering the emergency shelter system are often placed in temporary facilities without considering the educational needs of the children, or the impact of being moved to unfamiliar and often distant communities. Overall, 71% of 277 homeless families interviewed by Advocates for Children in 1989 (Rafferty & Rollins, 1989) were in temporary shelter facilities in a different borough than their last permanent home.

Research on residential instability among housed families with children indicates that

both adults and children who move frequently are at increased risk for physical and mental health problems, especially depression and low self esteem (cf. Brett, 1980; Fried, 1963; Kantor, 1965; Stokels & Schumaker, 1982; Syme, Hyman, & Enterline, 1965). One can only imagine how much more devastating it is for homeless families with children as they are shuffled from one shelter placement to another. We do, however, know that unsafe, chaotic, unpredictable shelter placements are not conducive to being educated. In fact, every district coordinator that we interviewed identified high mobility from one shelter to another as a major barrier to school attendance and academic achievement. In addition, short shelter stays has been identified as a major barrier to school attendance by the U.S. Department of Education, (1990). The transient nature of the shelter system and the nomadic lives these children are forced to lead is counter productive to a successful education.

Effective strategies:

- Under no circumstances should families requesting shelter be turned away and denied their legal right to shelter.
- The HRA should comply with shelter placement requirements as set forth in the DSS 9/1/88 transmittal No. 88-ADM-41.
- Families with children should receive stable emergency shelter placements. They should not be bounced from one shelter to another.
- Overnight placements and the use of short stay hotels should not be an option for families with children, because they prevent children from going to school.

FINDING 7: Inadequate conditions in emergency shelter facilities.

Part 900 of the Official Regulations of the DSS, Title 18, NYCRR, dated 7/4/86, also set requirements for emergency shelter facilities. These standards are routinely being violated in NYC (Citizens Committee for Children, 1988).

Conditions within emergency shelter facilities in NYC involve exposure to a range of risk factors that threaten physical and psychological well-being. Inadequate shelter conditions were identified by 13 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed for this project

as being a major barrier to school attendance and academic achievement. Conditions in many welfare hotels (which currently shelter 15% of homeless families) are utterly brutal and shocking, and fail to meet court ordered standards. Rooms are rarely equipped with the kitchen facilities required by law, and even hot plates to warm food and baby bottles are generally prohibited. Refrigerators to store food are scarce. Chipping, peeling and exposed paint in a number of hotels contains lead in concentrations substantially greater than the level permitted by law. These hotels offer little security. Children placed in them are regularly exposed to drug traffic, prostitution, and violent crime. Yet, homeless families are sheltered in hotels which violate state regulations, and at enormous expense -- $2,000 to $3,000 per month per family -- for excessive periods of time.

The conditions in other private and public shelters also place children at risk. Congregate living environments in many shelters (which currently shelter 12% of the homeless families) present optimal conditions for the transmission of infectious and communicable diseases such as upper respiratory infections, skin disorders, and diarrhea (Citizens Committee for Children, 1988). According to the NYC Department of Health (1986), "***There appears to be no basis for concluding that congregate family shelters can be operated in compliance with basis principles of public health***" (p.5). In addition, such social stressors as the noise level when many individuals share the same room, as well as the constant flow of traffic, make it difficult for homeless children to do their homework and get a sufficient amount of sleep. In fact, every district coordinator that we interviewed cited fatigue as a major barrier to school attendance and academic achievement.

The harsh conditions in these facilities are endangering our children. Children need security, privacy, and a place where they can thrive and develop. Instead, the conditions they are exposed to - the squalor, the lack of safe food storage and preparation facilities, the physically dangerous environments - predispose these children to an increased risk of

disease, injury, situational stress, disorientation, isolation, and hopelessness.

Effective strategies:

- o NYC should comply with the shelter requirements outlined in Part 900 of the Official Regulations of the DSS, Title 18, NYCRR.

- o The HRA should provide all new shelter entrants with a list of agencies and services that offer help to those new in the area (e.g., The Directory of Health Services for Homeless and Relocated Families, distributed by the United Hospital Fund).

FINDING 8: Emotional problems and adjustments resulting from the loss of a home, living in emergency shelters, and frequent school transitions.

Given the disruptions, losses and uncertainties associated with the loss of a permanent home and the subsequent experiences within the emergency shelter system, some homeless children come to school with emotional conflicts that impact on their ability to concentrate on academic tasks. Psychological problems most often identified among homeless children include anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems. In some cases, psychological counseling may be necessary to enable them to succeed academically, and benefit from education.

In addition, children of battered women are caught in the crossfire of family violence. In some cases, the children are also victims of physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse. Clearly, these children need understanding, attention, and someone to talk to.

Despite these needs, the availability of counselors, social workers, and psychologists do not meet the need for such services. Few elementary schools have full-time counselors. Some schools have counselors only one or two days a week. Counselors in secondary schools generally have many responsibilities such as scheduling and testing that limit the amount of time they have to address the emotional needs of homeless students. In some schools, counselors feel that they do not have adequate time to appropriately respond to the needs of children coming from typical home environments. These counselors are likely to have only minimal amounts of time to respond to the many needs of homeless children.

School social workers are trained to respond to certain counseling needs. However, many schools do not have social workers at all. Where they do exist, the size of their caseload generally prevents them from being able to adequately respond with the time intensive assistance required.

Effective strategies:

- The mental health needs of homeless children need to be recognized and addressed. Homeless students should be given the name and location of one caring adult in the school to whom they can reach out in crisis situations.
- Schools should provide counseling or other guidance services to the greatest extent possible. Encourage counselors to work individually with students, in small groups, and with teachers.
- Schools should establish group guidance sessions to provide students with an active support system, and reduce student isolation and anonymity.
- School districts should involve mental health volunteers in the schools.
- Districts should develop a network of referral sources to ensure that the mental health needs of students are met. Schools should make referrals to community-based mental health care agencies when appropriate.
- Children experiencing trauma from either witnessing or experiencing domestic violence should be linked with other programs, such as community mental health programs for children with emotional problems.
- The Central Board should conduct training programs on the special needs of children who have witnessed or personally experienced domestic violence.

FINDING 9: Unmet medical, dental, nutrition, and other health needs.

Studies have consistently found that homelessness is compounded by a lack of food and poor nutrition (cf. Simpson, Kilduff, & Blewett, 1984; U. S. Conference of Mayors, 1989). Homeless children also experience significantly more acute and chronic health problems than their permanently housed peers. Overall, homeless children are at greater risk for low birth weight, higher infant mortality, upper respiratory infections, skin ailments, ear disorders, chronic physical disorders, gastrointestinal disorders, and higher levels of lead in their blood (cf. Molnar, Rath, & Klein, 1991; Rafferty & Rollins, 1989; Rafferty & Shinn, 1991).

Homeless families face great difficulties trying to manage on inadequate benefits,

not receiving the benefits to which they are entitled, and erroneous case closings (National Coalition for the Homeless, 1988). In addition, access to timely and consistent health care is compromised by extreme poverty, removal from community ties, frequent disruptions in family life, and lack of health insurance (Angel & Worobey, 1988; Rafferty & Rollins, 1989; Roth & Fox, 1988). Without adequate primary and preventive health care services, homeless children cannot maintain adequate levels of attendance.

Lack of health and mental health care has been identified as a major barrier to school attendance nationwide by the U.S. Department of Education (1990), and locally by each of the district coordinators interviewed for this project. Our respondents indicated that the frequent outbreaks of measles, mumps, and chicken pox outbreaks at the congregate shelters,[25] a high prevalence of children with asthma, and teenage pregnancy were especially problematic. The lack of day care for teen parents has also been identified as a major barrier to school attendance for homeless students nationwide (U.S. Department of Education, 1990).

Effective strategies:

- Homeless families with children should not be sheltered in congregate facilities, since they provide neither humane nor healthy environments for children struggling to survive.
- District coordinators should identify local health care providers where families can obtain appropriate health care services, and distribute this information to families at the shelters and hotels.
- Schools should work with the Health Education and Services Network, administered by the SED to help protect the health of homeless children. This recently established clearinghouse will help educators identify available health education curricula, model prevention and intervention programs, and new state and federal initiatives.
- Model health and nutrition programs should be replicated. Especially noteworthy is Cornell Cooperative Extension's Growing Healthy New York, which is reported to be easily integrated into K-9 curriculum.
- Programs for pregnant and parenting teens must be expanded to meet the needs of homeless children at risk of being forced out of school. Without day care services for the children of teen parents, young mothers cannot attend school.

[25] In some cases, families with children are temporarily moved to a different shelter, often in a different borough, during these outbreaks at the congregate shelters.

FINDING 10: Family stress.

Developmental psychologists have established that the home environment is the single most important influence on how well a child does in school (cf. Bronfenbrenner, 1974; 1979). Bronfenbrenner (1974), for example, concludes that the most powerful predictor of school performance is an environment which provides substantial opportunity and support for parental activity. Disadvantaged families, often lacking this essential pre-requisite for the child's development, are at increased risk for educational failure:

> "***The conditions in life are such that the family cannot perform its childrearing functions even though it may wish to do so.... It may well be that the most powerful technique for achieving substantial and enduring growth in I. Q., and in other more significant spheres of development, for children living in the most deprived circumstances is to provide the family with adequate health care, nutrition, housing and employment***" (p. 48).

Most homeless families are headed by single women, which puts them at increased risk of poverty and stress (National Center for Children in Poverty, 1990). Stress within the family is a major risk factor associated with homelessness. An acute form of family stress, domestic violence, was listed as a major cause of homelessness by eight cities of the 27 participating in the U.S. Conference of Mayors survey (1989). It is also the leading reason for family homelessness in New York State -- outside of NYC (New York State Education Department, 1990).

The loss of one's home and subsequent entry into the emergency shelter system is a composite of many conditions and events, including extreme poverty, changes in residences, schools and services, loss of possessions, disruptions in social networks, and exposure to extreme hardship (Molnar & Rubin, 1991). Losing one's home is perhaps one of the greatest threats to the emotional, physical, and psychological well-being of any person. Disruptions to the home environment inevitably take their toll on the education of children, health care, and any semblance of normal family life. With family life in a

state of disarray, the ability to function as a family is hampered or even paralyzed.

Family stress has been identified as one of the major barriers to school attendance by the U. S. Department of Education (1990). In addition, a recent survey of 389 school district personnel and 142 shelter providers conducted in California, identified stress within the homeless family and in the homeless family's environment as the most significant barriers to education (California State Department of Education, 1989). It was also identified as a major barrier to school attendance and academic achievement by 16 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed for this project.

Homeless parents often encounter difficulties balancing physical, social and personal needs of themselves and their children, which create a major barrier to school attendance (U. S. Department of Education, 1990). They must continually struggle to maintain their day-to-day survival -- obtain emergency shelter, food, health care; keep the numerous social services appointments associated with maintaining whatever benefits that may be available; and, at the same time, search for scarce available affordable permanent housing. Many district coordinators reported that parents often keep their children out of school to babysit for younger siblings while they go through the rituals involved in accessing the necessary services. Priority is frequently given to meeting these essential survival needs, causing educational needs to recede in importance.

The loss of control over their environment and their lives, and deprivation of basic needs place homeless parents at increased risk for learned helplessness, depression, and drug or alcohol dependency, further compounding the level of family disruption (Eddowes and Hranitz, 1989). These factors in turn, place children at increased risk for depressive disorders, behavior problems, anxiety, attention problems, insecure attachment, and social incompetence (cf. Dodge, 1990; Rutter, 1990).

Effective strategies:

- The City of New York must reduce the number of homeless families with children by addressing the root cause of homelessness: the shortage of affordable permanent housing. Policy must focus on rehousing those who are currently homeless, as well as on developing strategies to prevent additional homelessness.

- Support groups at emergency shelter facilities should be established to help families cope with the temporary disruption to their lives.

- Workshops on the legal rights of homeless families should be provided at each emergency shelter facility on a regular basis. Legal Aid's The Legal Rights of the Homeless should be distributed to all homeless families.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, given the numerous obstacles to school attendance and academic success that homeless children must confront, it is amazing that they ever make it to school at all or achieve any academic success. Clearly, there is an urgent need to minimize the impact that such factors are having on the school attendance and academic success of homeless children.

Their physical needs are compromised by disruptive and unstable emergency shelter placements, high mobility from one shelter to another, the inadequate conditions in emergency shelters, inadequate health care, hunger and poor nutrition, and sleep deprivation resulting from frequent moves, erratic schedules, and unsuitable sleeping accommodations.

Their emotional needs are compromised by family stress, anxiety, depression, and other adjustments attributable to the loss of one's home and friends, residing in emergency shelter facilities, and frequent school transitions, embarrassment resulting from their unstable living arrangements and lack of adequate clothing, and having to cope with being stigmatized and rejection by peers.

Their school needs are compromised by disruptions in educational services resulting from poorer school attendance, ridicule by classmates, multiple movements between schools, difficulties in obtaining school supplies, academic failure, grade retention, poor

communication between schools and emergency shelter facilities, lack of parental involvement, insensitivity from school staff, and diminished expectations from teachers.

CHAPTER TEN

SUPPORT SERVICES TO ENHANCE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

To compensate for the disruption in their lives, continual readjustment to different school settings and teaching methods, and the many other problems that place them at risk for academic failure, the educational system must confront a myriad of challenges to successfully meet the educational needs of homeless children. While these needs cannot be met by the school system alone, there are several important interventions that could help prevent academic failure while children are without homes.

On the one hand, school administrators have an important role to play in minimizing educational disruption when children become homeless, by ensuring they get timely and appropriate assistance to either continue attending their current school, or transfer into local appropriate classroom placements with minimum delay. On the other hand, given the transient nature of homelessness and its effects on children, homeless children need more than equal access to the classroom. First, every attempt to remove the obstacles to school attendance and academic performance described in the previous chapter must be made. In addition, educational support services that promote regular school attendance and academic success must be implemented.

In this chapter, we focus primarily on the BOE's program to enhance the school attendance of homeless children and youth, critique this program, and provide some effective strategies to overcome the obstacles that prevent homeless children from accessing available services. Our major findings include:

- Homeless elementary and junior high school students, while prioritized for placement in Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention (AI/DP) programs, seldom receive these services.
- The system for monitoring the school attendance of homeless children is inadequate.

- o Follow-up services for children enrolled in district schools need to be improved, especially for children who are not attending school in the district where their shelter is located.

- o There are no systematic attendance outreach efforts made by the Citywide Division of Special Education when homeless children with severe handicapping conditions are not attending school.

- o There are no attendance outreach efforts being made by the High School Division for truant high school students.

- o Services are rarely provided to children and youth who have dropped out of school.

In addition, certain groups of students are routinely excluded from receiving attendance support services.

- o Children in domestic violence shelters are not considered homeless by the school system, so they do not receive the attendance support services available to homeless children in other emergency shelter facilities.

- o Children placed in emergency shelter facilities in NYC because of insufficient emergency space in Westchester, who attend schools in NYC, are not tracked by the Central Board or by community school districts. Therefore, they receive no attendance support services.

FINDING 1: Homeless elementary and junior high school students, while prioritized for placement in Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention (AI/DP) Programs, seldom receive these services.

To compensate for the sharp decrease in funding for programs for homeless children during the 1990-1991 school year, and the subsequent loss of existing supplemental school-based services for homeless children, homeless children were prioritized for placement in AI/DP programs. While AI/DP programs offer the types of comprehensive services that homeless students need, including attendance outreach, counseling or case management services and parental involvement, they are not sufficient to address the needs of homeless students.

The major problem is that elementary and junior high school students who are homeless are placed in 745 different schools; AI/DP programs are only in 113 schools.

While not all schools are eligible for AI/DP funding, many of the schools that are eligible are not funded. For example, only 49 of the 162 eligible elementary schools received AI/DP funding last year. Junior high schools fared much better: 84 of the 89 eligible schools were funded. Furthermore, many homeless children are not attending schools with AI/DP funding, despite the fact that their schools are eligible. Further, even when programs do exist, homeless children are not always able to participate. For example, AI/DP programs target 150 students in each participating middle school, and 75 students in each elementary school. However, several districts have hundreds of homeless children attending the same school.

For the most part, district coordinators were unable to provide us with an accurate estimate of the proportion of homeless elementary school-age students receiving AI/DP services. Of the 22 district coordinators interviewed, 6 reported that none of the homeless elementary school-age students attending district schools were receiving AI/DP services; 3 estimated that services were provided to less than 20%; 2 estimated a range of 20% to 30%; 3 estimated a range of 40% to 50%; 4 estimated a range of 50% to 75%; and 4 were unable to provide us with any estimate at all.[26] We also asked the Central Board to provide us with the proportion of homeless children who were in AI/DP programs. They were unable to provide us with this information.

Finally, we attempted to assess the extent to which AI/DP programs were operational by the October 15, 1990 deadline. Unfortunately, we were not able to obtain this information either from the Central Board or other district personnel. Anecdotal comments, however, made by several people that we interviewed, suggest that some programs did not start until January of 1991. In addition, the mandated components,

[26] Similar findings emerged when we asked about the availability of AI/DP services for junior high school students. Interested readers may obtain this information from AFC.

described earlier, were not part of some of the AI/DP programs that we observed. Clearly, more systematic data needs to be collected on this issue.

Effective strategies:

- The BOE must program its database to provide information on the proportion of homeless students who receive AI/DP services.
- Monitoring reports on AI/DP programs should be made available to all interested parties in a timely manner.
- Prompt action must be taken to ensure that homeless students receive AI/DP services.
- Schools with a large proportion of homeless students should receive AI/DP funding to provide these services to homeless students in a non-stigmatizing manner.

FINDING 2: The system for monitoring the school attendance of homeless children is inadequate.

District personnel spend a considerable amount of time every month documenting the attendance of homeless students attending schools in their community school district -- regardless of where the children are actually sheltered. This information is provided to the Central Board, where monthly attendance report summaries (MARS) by shelter, district, and school are tabulated and returned to district coordinators. Students in AI/DP programs also have their attendance monitored by AI/DP. Frequently, however, attendance services are fragmented and duplicative. For example, New York State Law, Sections 3024, 3025, and 3211, require that records of attendance be kept on every student, whether in general education or in special education. The Commissioner of Education has prescribed rules for this process, and the Chancellor has established regulations (A-210) to implement these legal requirements.

While all district coordinators indicated that it is beneficial to know the actual school attendance rates of homeless children, 20 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed indicated that the current system is seriously flawed and needs to be made more useful.

> ***"The summary reports provided by Central are useless and serve no function whatsoever. It takes them three months or more to prepare them -- by that time the information is out of date and of no use to us."***

Other problems identified by district coordinators pertained to the accuracy of the reports. For example:

> ***"When I complete the report, I add on the names of children who are not on the roster -- children who entered district schools within the past month. I also remove the names of the children who left our schools during the month. I expect these changes to appear on the following month's printout. They don't. I have to do it all over again. Sometimes, children are here for months and never appear on the MARS."***

Effective strategies:

- Information written into the prior MARS must be incorporated into the following month's printout.
- Monthly summaries must be provided by the Central Board in a more timely, efficient manner.

FINDING 3: Follow-up services for children enrolled in district schools need to be improved, especially for children who are not attending school in the district where their shelter is located.

Attendance monitoring without adequate follow-up services when problems are identified is worthless. Prompt contact with the family and student is essential in reducing absenteeism -- a reliable indicator of future dropouts.

As previously mentioned, district coordinators are responsible for monitoring the attendance of students attending schools in their district. When problems are identified, the school's attendance coordinator is responsible for providing follow-up services to the family and the student. For children in permanent housing, this process is facilitated by their having an address at which they can receive mail, and often a telephone to receive calls. Homeless families generally have neither.

When children with attendance problems are sheltered in the same district where they attend school, attendance teachers and family assistants are easily able to locate the family to improve attendance. When children are not attending school in the district where their shelter is located, the process does not run as smoothly. This occurs for two reasons. First, the district coordinator in the district where the child is living does not receive

attendance data on children attending schools outside of the district until it is sent to the Central Board by the child's school. This takes months. Although some district coordinators compensate for this by actually calling each child's school on a regular basis to inquire about their school attendance, this is not a common policy. Second, attendance coordinators in the district where the truant child is enrolled are often reluctant to take the extra steps needed to contact families and students who do not live close to the school.

Effective strategies:

- Encourage shelter directors to work with parents to ensure that children attend school. This policy is successfully used in some shelters.
- Children who manifest attendance problems must be brought to the attention of the attendance coordinator in their school district. Follow-up services must be provided as required.
- Policies and procedures must be established to address the needs of children with poor attendance who are not attending school in the district where the shelter is located.
- Attendance coordinators in each community school should be provided with an accurate list of names and phone numbers for each district coordinator and the on-site family assistant assigned to each shelter.
- Attendance coordinators and on-site family assistants should help parents of children with poor attendance to resolve the problems that are having a negative impact on their child's attendance.
- Attendance programs should offer recognition to students with good attendance as well as make provisions for students with poor attendance.
- Incentives should be provided to support student attendance.

FINDING 4: There are no systematic attendance outreach efforts made by the Citywide Division of Special Education when homeless children with severe handicapping conditions are not attending school.

As previously mentioned, children with severe handicapping conditions (e.g., hard of hearing, with serious emotional and social needs) are in special programs, administered by the Citywide Division of the BOE. Unlike children in regular education and special education students attending district schools, district coordinators do not provide monthly attendance reports for students in the Citywide Division. Instead, the Citywide Division completes these reports and provides the information directly to the Central Board's Office

for Students in Temporary Housing.[27] In addition, the Division of Special Education keeps a separate list of special education students who have been absent for 20 consecutive days -- the Special Attendance Register (SAR). The teacher informs the site supervisor and the CSE when a student is to be placed on the SAR.

The Division of Special Education has its own attendance teachers who are required to follow-up on students in "Citywide" programs who are not attending school. In addition, special AIDP programs provide Central Based AIDP services by a social worker, teacher trainer, and family outreach worker to supplement mandated daily attendance services. Homeless students who attend citywide schools designated as AI/DP sites are eligible to participate in the citywide AI/DP programs.

Only 6 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed reported that the attendance outreach services for students in "Citywide" programs were adequate. Ten of the others indicated that they were not aware of any follow-up visits being made, and the remainder (4) did not know if services were adequate or not. According to one district coordinator:

> *"The citywide attendance teachers never come out, or if they do, they do not communicate with us."*

Effective strategies:

- The Citywide Division should be provided with an accurate list of district coordinators and family assistants assigned to each shelter, and their phone numbers. District coordinators should be involved in all follow-up services to truant students.
- The Central Board must bring all involved parties together to establish policies and procedures for truant homeless students in "Citywide" programs. The supervisor of attendance must become more involved.
- All data on homeless students in "Citywide" programs should be shared with district coordinators and other interested parties.
- The Central Board must establish communication between the Citywide Division, Citywide principals, Citywide attendance teachers, and district coordinators.

[27] In rare cases, district coordinators also call the schools to verify attendance and work with the family when problems are identified.

FINDING 5: There are no attendance outreach efforts being made by the High School Division for truant high school students.

The Central Board's High School Memorandum #43, dated October 23, 1989, states that attendance outreach services are to be provided to homeless students in the event of three consecutive absences or spotty attendance records. It also clarifies the responsibilities of those involved with homeless high school students around attendance issues:

> ***"While attendance teachers on-site in temporary hotels/shelters and district coordinators should assist high school attendance teachers, the final responsibility for all attendance and educational functions for students in temporary housing remains with the High School Division."***
>
> ***"The high school attendance coordinator in each high school, under the supervision of the high school principal, should be responsible for receiving, updating and transmitting rosters of students residing in temporary housing, ensuring accuracy of the report and the necessary follow-up of essential support services."***
>
> ***"The high school attendance teacher, as an outreach worker, does follow-up on students' cutting patterns, lateness and repeated absences. The attendance teacher receives referrals through completed 407s and attempts to return the student to the educational environment. If there is a specific problem with a specific student in a hotel/shelter, the attendance teacher will contact the district coordinator in order to ameliorate the situation."***

We previously discussed issues around the successful identification of high school students and what is being done to ensure timely transfer into district schools, or continuity of education at current schools. In addition to these problems, homeless high school students are not receiving the attendance services that they are supposed to receive. With one exception, every district coordinator interviewed stated that they have never, or very rarely, received a call regarding a truant high school student. Nor are they receiving attendance data collected through the MARS. According to one district coordinator with a large number of high school students living in his district:

> ***"The High School Division is not involved. They do not know who the homeless high school students are. Nor do they follow up on students who are not attending. I got one call in three years regarding the school attendance of a high school student. The high school attendance division doesn't care about homeless***

children. They don't come out, follow-up, or communicate with anyone. The High School Division should be decentralized. They are not accountable to anyone."

Another family assistant at one site reported:

"When high school students are bounced around, their attendance suffers. There is no liaison in the High School Division to watch out for them. They are lost and neglected by the system. Nobody knows the stressors they are under. We see the deterioration, the schools do not. Over time, they get discouraged and stop going. Yet, nobody seems to care, or even notice that they are not going to school."

Another district coordinator said:

"Nobody watches over them. Most are LTA (long term absent) as a result of their mobility. Yet, we never hear from the high schools or the High School Division. Attendance teachers do not come to the shelter. Even when we have persisted in bringing a case to their attention, they will not come out. They tell us we are too far away. They tell us that it is our problem, and that our attendance teachers should do whatever needs to be done."

In the case of the one district coordinator who was very satisfied with the assistance he received from the High School Division, his strategy was to deal directly with the supervisor of attendance in his borough. Once this attendance officer is informed that the child has not attended school for 10 consecutive days, a site visit is arranged. However, this coordinator indicated that the main reason for the involvement of the High School Division in his district, is that he actually initiates the contact, and ensures that follow up services are provided. Interestingly, only students who have missed ten consecutive days are brought to the attention of the supervisor of attendance.

Some district coordinators attempt to compensate for the lack of concern displayed by the High School Division. In some shelters where children are required to sign out in the mornings, family assistants check to see who is absent that day and visits are made to the family. In other rare cases, family assistants call the high schools and ask for attendance data. When problems are identified, district personnel make home visits to try to get the child's attendance to improve. Most districts, however, are not doing this.

In addition to the lack of support services around attendance issues, district coordinators also noted that there were few in school support services available in the high schools. At the very least, there should be programs that address after-school, counseling, and tutorial needs.

Effective strategies:

- The High School Division must designate a liaison person to ensure that all homeless students are identified, provided with attendance monitoring, and receive outreach services when required.
- The Supervisor of attendance in each borough must designate an attendance coordinator in each high school who is responsible for monitoring the attendance of all homeless students in that school.
- Attendance data on homeless high school students should be shared with district coordinators and other interested parties on a monthly basis.
- District coordinators must verify that each high school student at their shelter sites appears on the attendance monitoring reports. When discrepancies are noted, it should be brought to the attention of the attendance coordinator at the child's school.
- The High School Division, attendance supervisors, attendance coordinators, and attendance teachers should be provided with an accurate list of district coordinators and family assistants assigned to each shelter and the phone numbers where they can be located.
- High school attendance teachers should provide follow-up services to all truant high school students. The High School Division needs to clarify what role district coordinators play in assisting with attendance outreach. If community school districts are to make home visits, funding should be made available for the provision of such services.
- The Central Board must bring all involved parties together to establish liaisons, and facilitate coordination and communication between them.

FINDING 6: Services are rarely provided to children and youth who have dropped out of school.

Children who transfer from school to school fall behind academically and get discouraged. This places them at greater risk of dropping out of school. The McKinney Act mandates that children who have dropped out of school be identified by the SED. In addition, the SED and the Chancellor's regulations require that the reason for a student's leaving school be verified.

District coordinators indicated that many homeless students drop out of school because of traditional problems such as poor grades, lack of interest in school, pregnancy,

parenting, and behavior problems. Others drop out because of factors directly related to their homelessness, including the need to work, babysit younger siblings, drug and alcohol use, and the instability of living arrangements. Some are embarrassed about their poverty and homelessness and drop out to prevent their peers from learning about their situations. Yet, few are targeted for intervention services, and alternative school programs and programs for pregnant and parenting teens are often filled.

> ***"There are no support services for children at risk of dropping out. Children who are LTA are not eligible for AIDP programs. The High School Division is not around. They should be making outreach efforts to keep children in school, and get them back into school if they drop out."***

For the most part, district coordinators were not aware of outreach efforts by the High School Division to keep students in school or to encourage them to return. Some district coordinators, however, praised the outreach efforts made by the office of the Superintendent of Alternative Schools and Special Programs for their alternative school program -- the Career Education Center -- which does an excellent job of providing outreach services to some of the children who have dropped out of school. Transitional services to get children to return to school are either provided on site at the shelter, or students are directed to available alternative programs. Unfortunately, the expansion of this program, facilitated by a McKinney Grant for exemplary programs in the amount of $123,557 has expired and will not be renewed during the 1991-1992 school year.

Effective strategies:

- Homeless children who have dropped out of school should be identified by the SED, in accordance with the McKinney Act.
- The High School Division should evaluate the reasons why homeless high school students are dropping out of school. Once this information has been obtained, intervention programs should be developed to prevent others from dropping out, and return those who have already dropped out of school.
- Teenagers who are pregnant or parenting and attending school, should receive stable emergency shelter placements. The City of New York must increase day care options for teenage parents.

- The High School Division should advertise programs that might be of interest to youth including programs for pregnant teens, work-study programs, alternative school programs, and vocational programs.

FINDING 7: Children in domestic violence shelters are not considered homeless by the school system, so they do not receive the attendance support services available to homeless children in other emergency shelter facilities.

In addition to not receiving on-site or other outreach services to expedite timely and appropriate school placements, other obstacles prevail for students who are residing in domestic violence shelters. The major problem is that families residing in domestic violence shelters are not considered homeless according to the BOE, regardless of whether or not they have a home of their own to return to. Therefore, their attendance is not being monitored, nor are they are prioritized for AI/DP programs, as are other children who are homeless.

Effective strategies:

- All homeless families residing in domestic violence shelters should be part of the Central Board's program for educating homeless children and youth.

FINDING 8: Children placed in emergency shelter facilities in NYC because of insufficient emergency space in Westchester, who attend schools in NYC, are not tracked by the Central Board or by community school districts. Therefore, they receive no attendance support services.

Placement of Westchester homeless families in welfare hotels in NYC, particularly in the Bronx and Central Harlem, is common. Technically, the BOE is responsible for the education of students who attend school in NYC. Nonetheless, Westchester BOCES has accepted responsibility to ensure that they register and attend school. However, this information is not being shared with either the Central Board, or the appropriate district coordinators, in accordance with Section 22 of Chapter 53 of the Laws of 91: "***the social service district which provides assistance... shall notify the commissioner, the school district of last attendance and the school district designated by the child, parent... within five days of such designation***." Consequently, these children get none of the services provided to other

homeless children attending the same school.

Effective strategies:

- The Central Board must establish communication with BOCES, and assume a leadership role in coordinating services to these students. District personnel and/or the High School Division must work with the appropriate schools to ensure that each child's educational needs are being met, and that attendance monitoring and other support services are provided.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, community school districts, the High School Division, and the division of special education receive funding to monitor the school attendance of homeless children. This is an important intervention for this group of students who are at high risk of not attending school on a regular basis. Unfortunately, however, the system as it is currently being implemented is inadequate.

In the case of elementary and junior high schools, the major problem is that the information is often inaccurate. In many cases, when the Central Board is informed that children are homeless and attending district schools, this information is not being input into the computer. Thus, when the following month's printout is being generated, children are not being listed. Furthermore, the Central Board received substantial funding to provide summary reports by each shelter, school, and district. However, since this process is so untimely, often taking three months to complete, the information is so out of date that it provides no useful guidance to districts.

The High School Division is responsible for monitoring the attendance of high school students regardless of where their shelter is located. The same is true for students with severe handicapping conditions who are in Citywide Special Education programs. This attendance data is not being shared with the district coordinators where the students are temporarily living. Consequently, unless district coordinators call the schools, they have no idea if any of the children in their shelters are truant. Attendance monitoring

without follow-up services when problems are identified is a waste of time. Yet, many district coordinators reported that follow-up services are notoriously poor, especially for children attending out of district schools, students in "Citywide" programs, and high school students. Apparently, there are no systematic attendance outreach procedures being followed for these students.

Finally, since children in domestic violence shelters are not considered homeless, they are not eligible for any of the attendance services being provided to other homeless students. Similarly, children are placed in emergency shelter facilities in NYC because of insufficient emergency space in Westchester, and attend NYC schools, receive none of the services provided to other homeless students attending the same schools.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SUPPORT SERVICES TO PREVENT ACADEMIC FAILURE

In addition to the attendance improvement services described in the previous chapter, the BOE also offers several programs to enhance the academic success of homeless children. School-based and community-based programs are also sometimes available. In this chapter, we provide an overview of available programs and offer some effective strategies to overcome the obstacles that prevent homeless children from accessing available services.

- There is great disparity in the ways that available funds are being used by community school districts to implement programs for homeless students. As a result, school-based services are being only haphazardly provided.
- Where school-based programs exist, barriers exclude homeless students from participating. Transportation is the most significant barrier to participation in before and after-school programs.
- Midyear school transfers prevent students from program participation due to already full registers.
- There are no policies or procedures to ensure that homeless students are placed in summer school programs.
- There are no services provided to homeless students as they relocate into permanent housing.
- Only 11 of the 56 facilities available to homeless families with school-age children provide any type of educational support services.
- There is an overall scarcity of community-based programs, and where they do exist, district coordinators are often unaware of them.
- The Technical Assistance Unit at the Central Board requires significant improvement in the delivery of necessary support services.
- The Cultural Arts Program provides children with a welcome respite from spending time at the shelter.
- The Emergency Assistance Unit Program has the potential to be beneficial. Currently, it is not cost efficient, outreach is minimal, it is

at the wrong EAU, and staff development is sorely needed.

- The West End Intergenerational Program is an excellent model and every effort should be made to expand it.

- The Relocation Program is not functioning as intended. It only serves families who are moving into "in-rem" scatter site apartments. The information in not being systematically forwarded to either the sending or receiving district. The new information is not being entered into the computerized student biofile.

FINDING 1: There is great disparity in the ways that available funds are being used by community school districts to implement programs for homeless students. As a result, school-based services are being only haphazardly provided.

As previously mentioned, some community school districts received a supplemental allocation for school-based services. During our interviewees with district coordinators, we attempted to ascertain if the district has received a supplemental allocation, and if so, what services were actually provided with these funds. Most districts, however, were unable to provide us with an accurate breakdown of the funding they received for either on-site or school-based services. The Central Board was also unable to provide us with accurate accounts of the allocations that each district finally received.

One possible explanation had to do with how and when supplemental funds were actually distributed by the Central Board. As previously mentioned, school districts were not informed that AI/DP resources would be available for pupil services at the school until several weeks into the school year. In addition, the allocations set forth in BOR Allocation Memorandum #15, 9/17/90, contained several errors, many of which took months to correct. For example, it established only 9 districts as being eligible for supplemental funding, omitting some districts with more than the required 50 students, and containing erroneous information on others. At least one district did not receive supplemental funds until April, 1991. In other cases, districts were initially given their allocation and subsequently had it rescinded at the end of March.

Within the chaos, we noted great discrepancies in how funds were actually being used to provide services to homeless children. While most districts tried to be innovative and provide as many services as possible, some districts did not use their funds as well. For example, one district used $140,000 of their $147,000 allocation for "on-site" services to pay the salaries of the district coordinator and an attendance teacher. There was no on-site person stationed at the large facility in their district, where 186 families were sheltered at the time of our interview. At the same time, the director of services at the shelter informed us that the children often would not go to school because they lacked school supplies.

The Central Board provides no guidelines to districts on how funding for "*supplemental pupil services at the school site*" were to be used. Consequently, we found great variations in how funds were actually used: to enhance on-site intake services; to hire aides at the school to assist with registration, link students with appropriate services, and complete the monthly attendance summaries; to hire attendance teachers, social workers, or guidance counselors at the school; to provide family workshops at the shelter; after-school programs; attendance incentives; school supplies; tokens for students and parents; homework assistance programs at the shelter; and classroom aides. Most district coordinators noted that the limited school-based services they were currently providing stood in sharp contrast with what they were able to provide the previous year when the funding was better organized by the Central Board and districts received $680 for every school-age child attending district schools.

In addition to better planning in the coming year for supplemental pupil services at the school site, steps must be taken to improve the integration of homeless students in all academic, enrichment, and extra-curricular activities in the school. Within school districts, the variety of programs can include dropout prevention programs, state and federa

compensatory education programs, counseling services, and other interventions. Too often, homeless children do not have the opportunity to benefit from these programs.

Similarly, there are services available through state, city, and community agencies that could help increase a homeless child's chance of success in schools.

Effective strategies:

- The Central Board must establish guidelines on how funding is to be used. Funding should be targeted to specific services. Supplemental funds for direct services should not be used to fund the administrative responsibilities of either the schools or the districts.
- The Central Board should provide all interested parties with an accurate breakdown of the allocations received by each community school district.
- Programs should be monitored by the Central Board, and districts held accountable for their use of program funds.
- Promising and innovative techniques should be encouraged. Successful models of service delivery should be identified and replicated.
- Tutoring and other remedial help to address academic deficits must be made available to help homeless children keep up with their school work and compensate for the disruptions caused by their loss of housing.
- The school system must provide after-school programs to provide both recreation and tutorial services for homeless children.
- When the Central Board evaluates the program for students in temporary housing, reports must be made available in a timely manner.
- In accordance with the McKinney Act, the SED should monitor local education agencies responsible for carrying out the program, and correct deficiencies identified through monitoring or evaluation.

FINDING 2: Where school-based programs exist, certain barriers exclude homeless students from participating. Transportation is the most significant barrier to participation in before and after-school programs.

Some homeless children travel lengthy distances to maintain enrollment at their current schools. Thus, participation in before and after-school programs is a problem, especially when it is dark, subway rides are dangerous, and they must arrive at the shelter in time for dinner.

Other problems exist for children who elect to transfer into local schools, but district policies prevent them from attending their zoned school. When children cannot walk to

their zoned schools, and instead must be bussed to more distant schools, they are only provided with transportation back to the shelter at the end of the school day. This policy prevents them from participating in after-school programs.

Effective Strategies:

- In accordance with the McKinney Amendments of 1990, transportation and other barriers that prevent homeless students from participating in available before and after-school programs must be addressed and removed. When children attend schools that are not within walking distance to the shelter, actual bus transportation must be provided to enable them to participate in all available before and after-school programs.

FINDING 3: Midyear transfers prevent students from program participation due to already full registers.

Other barriers prevent students from accessing after-school and other available school-based programs, including World of Work and Latch-Key Programs. In most cases, programs are filled to capacity by the middle of September. Thus, homeless children, who routinely bounce from shelter to shelter and from school to school, are often prevented from receiving services. Furthermore, latch-key programs exclude children of parents who are not working. Ironically, some schools tell homeless students that they cannot participate in after-school programs, because "*they have a program at the shelter, and they must go there.*"

Effective Strategies:

- In accordance with the McKinney Amendments of 1990, shelter bouncing and the resultant school bouncing that prevent children from accessing available programs must cease.

- Schools must be reminded that excluding homeless children from participating in available school programs is illegal. An appropriate proportion of slots within each program must be reserved for homeless children.

FINDING 4: There are no policies or procedures to ensure that homeless students are placed in summer school programs.

In NYC, summer programs are available for students completing grades kindergarten and grades 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7. Children eligible for these programs are at risk of being held over or have not met standards for promotion to the next grade. While homeless children

are twice as likely to repeat a grade (Rafferty & Rollins, 1989), this eligibility criteria actually excludes many of them. First, homeless students are less likely to have their records available. Second, homeless students are less likely to have test scores entered in their records. For example, Advocates for Children found that 21% of 4,839 homeless students who should have taken the DRP reading test in May 1988, either were not tested or did not have reported scores listed. This was almost double the rate for all NYC students who did not have scores listed (12%). This finding remained consistent when we looked at MAT scores: 19% vs 12% did not have scores listed (Rafferty & Rollins, 1989).

Effective Strategies:

- Homeless students should be prioritized for summer school programs.

FINDING 5: There are no services provided to homeless students as they relocate into permanent housing.

When homeless families with children relocate into permanent housing they experience more disruption in their lives. Most are moved to permanent housing in a borough different from the location of their emergency shelter facility, and often different from their prior permanent home. Children need to be enrolled in new schools, and transportation to these schools must be arranged.

The majority of new permanent housing for homeless families is in neighborhoods with a substantial lack of social programs and job opportunities. The delivery of educational services to children transferred to permanent housing must be assured if the families are going to stabilize in their new homes.

During the 1989-1990 school year, districts received $385 for each relocated student to provide supplemental educational services. This allocation was discontinued during the 1990-1991 school year. To compensate for the loss in services, districts were urged to place children who relocate into already overburdened and overcrowded AI/DP programs. Further compounding the inadequacy of this proposed solution, there was no process in

place to inform district coordinators of the identity of the relocated students.

Effective Strategies:

- Families who are relocating into permanent housing should meet with BOE representatives prior to their move to arrange for appropriate school placements and transportation.
- Attendance monitoring and follow-up services should be provided to relocated students for twelve months.
- District coordinators should be informed of the arrival of formerly homeless students into their districts.

FINDING 6: Only 11 of the 56 facilities available to homeless families with school-age children provide any type of educational support services.

While after-school programs at the shelter site could provide homeless children with something to do at the end of the school day, they are only rarely available. Of the 56 emergency shelters within the jurisdiction of the 22 district coordinators interviewed, only 11 had any type of after-school program. Of these, only seven were funded by the BOE; the remainder were funded by the shelter. Another program, an impressive model, was canceled in March when funding was rescinded by the BOE.

Effective Strategies:

- Homework help and other after-school services should be provided at each emergency shelter facility, and made available to the vast majority of homeless children who do not have after-school programs at their schools.
- District coordinators should develop a shelter-based tutor volunteer network.

FINDING 7: There is an overall scarcity of community-based programs, and where they do exist, district coordinators are often unaware of them.

Only 8 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed were aware of the existence of any community-based services within their school districts. However, even when programs are available, homeless children are often unable to access services because of the following barriers: programs are full; programs are available only for children of a certain age; programs restrict their services to boys; and they are too far away and transportation is not provided.

Effective strategies:

- o School and district personnel should link with community-based organizations and plan collaboratively to deliver a broader range of services from school buildings.

- o Schools must begin to work more creatively with community-based organizations to offer interesting and innovative cultural, educational, recreational, and social service programs. These programs should be available after-school, on weekends, and during the summer.

- o Particular emphasis should be placed on preparing school and CBO staff to work together effectively. Pitfalls and successful strategies should be identified and disseminated to district and school staff and to CBO personnel who are planning to work together.

- o Use of community resources and linkages with CBOs and public agencies require educational and community planning to identify and coordinate programs and services in the neighborhood, e.g., day care, recreation, social services, health, and other community programs.

- o Transportation must be provided to enable students to participate in available community programs.

FINDING 8: The Technical Assistance Unit at the Central Board requires significant improvement in the delivery of necessary support services.

The Central Board's Office of Students Living in Temporary Housing is responsible for programs and services to families with school-age homeless children. This office provides technical assistance, attendance analysis data, tracking and monitoring of students, and interagency coordination and collaboration. Overall $630,000 from AI/DP funds was allocated to provide these services in 1990-1991.

Overall, 16 of the 22 district coordinators interviewed were not satisfied with the assistance provided by the Central Board. While most of the criticisms focused on the problems with inaccurate and untimely attendance reports, we also heard many concerns pertaining to the quality of the technical assistance provided, including:

> *"They are not useful at all. They should be able to answer our questions, but they often give us wrong information. They are out of touch with the issues, and especially when it comes to our budget. What we need is a knowledgeable resource person who has the clout to do what needs to be done."*

> *"We need meetings that are useful and provide us with direction. They should be providing workshops and telling us what successful practices other districts have in place."*

> *"We were not provided with an updated list of who the other district coordinators*

were until the middle of February. We also had out of date phone numbers for the district offices and the shelter workers."

"Interagency conflict is where they could play their biggest role. They need to foster coordination and communication between the shelters, the permanent housing sites, the schools, the High School Division, special education, and the community-based organizations in the area."

The Central Board must provide staff development. There is currently no format in place for the sharing of information, or addressing staff development needs. A series of conferences and workshops could address this gap in services. While the Central Board should be responsible for facilitating the meetings and providing the resources and personnel, an advisory group of people from within the districts could ensure that pertinent issues are identified and addressed. Involving districts in participating in such problem solving activities would be extremely empowering.

Issues should include: (a) intervention strategies that work -- e.g., to improve attendance; (b) incentive strategies -- e.g., to improve lateness, behavior problems, academic problems, parent involvement participation; (c) strategies to monitor program expenditure -- e.g., the purchasing of materials for parent involvement, or identifying companies that have the required materials; (d) how to facilitate collaboration and communication with community-based organizations -- e.g., who are they, what do they do, how to work together; (e) parent involvement strategies -- what are districts doing, identify successful practices, what are the problems implementing the program, what needs to be changed; and (f) management systems -- e.g. what management systems have proven to be helpful, what forms have been created, attendance outreach, case management approaches. In addition, some supervisors of guidance get excellent training on such topics as death trauma, child abuse, phobias, etc. This information is needed by district personnel and it does not filter down. The appropriate personnel could present this information if a format was in place for them to do so.

Effective strategies:

- The Central Board should establish a network of experts, including providers, educators, and advocates, who are knowledgeable regarding the educational needs of homeless children, and services that are available to address these needs.
- Staff development should be a major part of the technical assistance provided by the Central Board. They should take a leadership role in implementing strategies pertaining to staff sensitivity and training.
- The Central Board should conduct training sessions, planned and executed by expert teams, including providers, educators and advocates.
- Meeting with district coordinators should be geared to providing useful information. Issues should be identified by district coordinators.
- Suggestions should be offered to districts related to how they might use and coordinate resources to best provide appropriate education to homeless children.
- The Central Board should provide district coordinators, family assistants, the High School Division, and the Division of Special Education with the exact requirements set forth in the McKinney Amendments of 1990. In this way, each responsible party will be fully informed as to his/her specific duties under federal law.
- The BOE must update Chancellor's Regulation A-780, and provide policies to bring the City into full compliance with the McKinney Amendments of 1990.

FINDING 9: The Cultural Arts Program provides children with a welcome respite from spending time at the shelter.

The BOE, in collaboration with the SED, the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Human Resources Administration, sponsors an after-school, week-end, and holiday cultural arts program for homeless children ages six through seventeen who are living in emergency shelter facilities in Queens and Manhattan. The project is held on-site at cultural institutions located in these two boroughs.

Children receive instruction in the visual and performing arts, humanities, literature, and science; with culminating events at the end of each ten to twelve week semester and holiday program. Special components of the project include open house presentations at the cultural sites, parental involvement workshops, and support from the school community.

The only weakness of this program, is that it is able to serve too few homeless children and youth. Overall 700 children participated in the 1989-1990 school year, and 1,000 during the 1990-1991 school year. Children who participate enjoy the activities, and

it provides them with a welcome respite from spending time at the shelter.

FINDING 10: **The Emergency Assistance Unit Program has the potential to be a beneficial. Currently, it is not cost efficient, outreach is minimal, it is at the wrong EAU, and the level of staff commitment needs to be improved.**

This BOE program is located at the Manhattan EAU, where families who previously lived in Manhattan go to request emergency shelter placements. A teacher involves children in small group activities -- with a primary focus on recreation and arts and crafts.

Families spend a considerable amount of time at emergency shelter units, often from 5.00pm, until the wee hours of the morning, but sometimes up to 25 hours (personal communication, Anna Lou Dehavenon, September 25, 1991). Children get restless, tired, and worn out. A recreational program provides parents with a needed break from their children, and gives the children something to do.

However, there are several weaknesses of this program. First, it is costly: $98,122 was awarded from AI/DP funds to operate it during the 1990-1991 school year. Second, there was a striking lack of outreach being made to families on several different visits we made to the facility. Many of the families we spoke with, some of whom had been at the same EAU several times were not aware that the program existed. Third, the Manhattan EAU is not the best location for this program: the need is greater at the larger Brooklyn site. Fourth, it is not always operational: on one of our monitoring visits, we found the teacher in the staff room rather than running the program.

FINDING 11: **The West End Intergenerational Program is an excellent model and every effort should be made to expand it.**

This program serves 25 adolescent mothers who attend Fordham University. They receive pre-GED training, preparation for college entry, college-level courses and/or advanced vocational training. While the mothers are attending classes at Fordham, there are LYFE Programs and preschool programs offered on-site at the residence for their

children. The major disadvantage to this otherwise excellent program is that it provides services to so few young mothers.

FINDING 12: The Relocation Program is not functioning as intended, and needs to be improved.

A BOE family assistant is assigned to the Office of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) Central Tenant Selection Unit in Manhattan, where families who are moving into in-rem scatter site apartments go to sign their leases. School options are discussed with each family, and if parents want their children transferred to new district schools, a letter of introduction is issued for them to bring to the appropriate schools. High school students are referred to the Office of High School Admissions. Children in "Citywide" programs are referred to the CSE in the new district.

All of the district coordinators interviewed by AFC indicated that they are not at all satisfied with the current procedures. It only serves families who are moving into in-rem scatter site apartments, the information is not being systematically forwarded to either the sending or receiving district, the schools where the children previously attended are not informed of the new address, and the new information is not being entered into the OEDS Biofile. Furthermore, simply directing high school and special education students elsewhere is not an efficient method for facilitating the timely transfer of students.

Effective strategies:

- Transitional services for homeless students moving into permanent housing must be improved. When parents enter the emergency shelter system, they should be informed of their educational rights while homeless and also when they find housing. Parents must be informed that their children have the right to stay in their current school through the terminal grade, and that transportation passes are available for the child. Parents should be required to meet with BOE staff at the shelter site prior to moving into permanent housing.

- Although the actual school records cannot be sent until a student appears on a new school's register, pertinent information should be obtained from the child's biofile prior to their transfer (test scores, LEP status, special education requirements, etc.), and attached to the letter of introduction for parents to bring to the new school.

CONCLUSION

The BOE provides some innovative programs for homeless students, including the Cultural Arts Program, the Emergency Assistance Unit Program, the West End Intergenerational Program, the Relocation Program, and the Central Based Technical Assistance Programs. Some of these programs are excellent, with their major weakness being that so few children actually receive the services that are available. Others, however, have major weaknesses.

The City's fiscal crisis has impacted the availability of school-based services to meet the needs of all NYC school children. However, homeless children do not appear to have the same access as permanently housed children even to programs that are available -- access that is mandated by the McKinney Act. The major barriers are that programs are filled to capacity and no provisions have been made for homeless students, who often transfer in the middle of the school year; transportation problems exist and no provisions have been made to remove them. Clearly, these barriers must be removed, program funds should be targeted to services, and districts monitored to ensure that the services are provided and that homeless children are not being excluded for any reason.

In addition to the lack of programs at the schools, and barriers that limit the availability of the few that do exist, shelter-based services for school-age children are almost nonexistent. Further, services in the community must be explored, and provisions made that would enable homeless children to participate in any available programs.

1974

CHAPTER TWELVE

CONCLUSION

When children become homeless, they lose more than their homes. Many also lose their friends, their pets, their health, their sense of security, belonging, and their chance for educational success. Thus, without the security of affordable permanent housing, homeless children inevitably face significant educational problems, and their ability to succeed in school is seriously compromised. Beyond all else, homeless children need homes. In the interim, they need adequate and stable emergency shelter, adequate food and nutrition, access to preventive and curative health and mental health services, early intervention programs to prevent the onset of developmental delays, and an opportunity to be educated.

Despite noteworthy progress in recent years in removing some major barriers to education for homeless children and youth, obstacles continue to exist that prevent homeless children from achieving regular school attendance and academic success. At the same time, their living situations present challenges to the educators who must strive to provide an environment that supports their physical, social, and emotional development, as well as a meaningful education under extremely difficult circumstances.

In this concluding chapter, we highlight specific policy recommendations. We focus first of all, on barriers that must be addressed by the State Education Department. We then present an overview of the barriers to service identified by this research project and previously described in detail. Finally, we recommend steps the New York State Education Department and the New York City Board of Education must take to remove these barriers and provide homeless children the chance to enhance their educational well being.

BARRIERS AT THE NEW YORK STATE LEVEL

Title VII-B of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, passed in 1987,

authorized federal funding for state educational agencies to carry out a detailed set of requirements to ensure that homeless children and youth have the same access to a free appropriate public education as children whose parents are fully established residents of the state. States with a residency requirement as components of its compulsory school attendance laws were required to review and undertake steps to revise those laws, and ensure that residency requirements do not pose any barrier to the education of homeless children.

New York State was the first state in the nation to enact legislation to remove the residency barriers confronting homeless children. However, this protection has only been extended to elementary and secondary students in Department of Social Services emergency shelter facilities, and homeless and runaway youth in select residential programs. New York State must now address the educational needs of all homeless children and youth in the state.

In November 1990, Congress took a major step towards improving the education of America's homeless children by expressing an intolerance for any barrier that impedes the academic success of homeless children and youth. Specifically, the McKinney Amendments of 1990 require states to look beyond residency issues and to review and revise all policies, practices, laws, and regulations that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, and school success homeless students. Yet, the recently amended New York State Commissioner's Regulation for educating homeless children and youth failed to address existing barriers in New York State. These omissions must be rectified to bring New York State into full compliance with the McKinney Amendments of 1990.

The Amendments also require that State Plans address how states will overcome existing barriers, including transportation, and ensure that homeless students receive comparable educational services, and the same access to other school programs including

tutoring, counseling, before and after-school programs, and state and local food programs. The New York State Plan for 1991-1994 does not include the necessary policies and procedures that must be implemented by local education agencies to ensure that this federal mandate will be met. It should.

The Amendments also tighten the monitoring requirements for state education departments, and mandate the provision of technical assistance. States are now directed to assume a leadership role in ensuring that local education agencies develop, review, and revise policies and procedures to remove barriers to the enrollment, retention and academic success of homeless students in school, and ensure that they receive all of the services available at their school to which they are entitled. Although New York State has not yet complied with this mandate, our hope is that with the implementation of the 1991-1994 State Plan it will.

Of critical importance, Congress acknowledged that providing direct services to homeless children is important to school success. For the first time, the Amendments explicitly permit McKinney Act funds to be used to provide an array of educational and support services. For example, schools may use the funds to provide before-school and after-school programs, tutoring, referral for medical and mental health services, preschool programs, parent education, counseling, social work services, and other services that may not otherwise have been provided by public schools. That only $7.2 million was appropriated, in contrast with the $50 million authorized, undoubtedly thwarts the efforts of school districts to provide the types of direct services needed to ensure the school success of many homeless students. However, it is critical that available funds be distributed as soon as possible. The State Education Department should expedite the process of implementing direct services with their fourth year funding. In addition, since fifth year funding has also been distributed, we suggest that New York State also use its

$700,000 allocation for direct services in the coming school year.

BARRIERS AT THE NEW YORK CITY LEVEL

In this report, Advocates for Children identifies educational barriers preventing homeless children and youth from receiving an appropriate public education. We also describe the impact of existing barriers and present effective strategies toward the removal of these barriers.

BARRIERS TO ENROLLMENT

One important key to minimizing the disruption and stress of homelessness for school-age children is continuity of education as they shift from school to school as the family is moved from shelter to shelter. In this study, we found that residency requirements and the lack of school records -- the most frequently mentioned barriers to timely placement when students are transferring into local schools all over the country -- are not major barriers to timely placement for homeless children in New York City. Most districts here have exemplary models in place to successfully identify children as they enter emergency shelter facilities, and place them in school with minimal delay. Services designed to eliminate enrollment barriers include the provision of on-site services, and in some cases registration materials are routinely completed at the shelter site. The Central Board should facilitate a process where such exemplary models can be shared with districts where improvements still need to be made.

There were, however, major barriers for specific subgroups of homeless students. For example, transportation problems continue to disrupt the continuity of education for children who do not transfer into local schools, and children in domestic violence shelters are excluded from all outreach and intake services. Another major finding was the denial of preschool programs for homeless children in New York City. This finding is consistent with recently released report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

(1991). In many states, approximately 50% of homeless children are under the age of six years. Since shelter conditions have been linked with developmental delays, early identification and enrollment of preschoolers is needed to prevent academic failure. Research has amply demonstrated the long term benefits of high quality programs for preschoolers in preventing school failure.

BARRIERS TO PROVIDING APPROPRIATE SERVICES

The McKinney Act mandates that homeless students be provided with programs and services that are provided to permanently housed children in the same district, including compensatory education, programs for students with handicapping conditions or limited English proficiency, programs for the gifted and talented, vocational education, alternative education, and school meals.

Being placed in appropriately is a major problem for homeless children in New York City, primarily because students are often not being placed in their zoned schools. This is due both to overcrowding and to district policies that are contrary to the McKinney Act and state and city regulations. In addition, delayed transfer of records has a significant negative impact on the ability of school districts to place students in appropriate classroom settings. Consequently, many children do not receive the remedial and other special services to which they are entitled.

While record delays impact negatively on all homeless students, it is particularly disruptive for children requiring special education services. They often must wait in regular education classes, or at the shelter, until appropriate placements and transportation is arranged. In addition, students requiring bilingual or ESL services are often not identified until their records arrive. Finally, students residing in domestic violence shelters, in addition to confronting the same problems with the transfer of records as other homeless children, need to have special attention paid to their records, to prevent abusive parents

from locating them.

BARRIERS TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

There is an urgent need to minimize the impact of factors associated with homelessness on school attendance and academic success. Children's physical needs are compromised by disruptive and unstable emergency shelter placements, high mobility from one shelter to another, inadequate conditions in emergency shelter facilities, inadequate health care, hunger and poor nutrition, and sleep deprivation resulting from frequent moves, erratic schedules, and unsuitable sleeping accommodations.

Their emotional needs are compromised by family stress, anxiety, depression and other adjustments resulting from the loss of one's home and friends, residing in emergency shelter facilities, and frequent school transitions, embarrassment resulting from their unstable living arrangements and lack of adequate clothing, and having to cope with being stigmatized and often rejected by peers.

Their school needs are compromised by disruptions in educational services resulting from poorer school attendance, ridicule by classmates, multiple movements between schools, difficulties in obtaining school supplies, academic failure, grade retention, poor communication between schools and emergency shelter facilities, lack of parental involvement, insensitivity of school staff, and diminished expectations of teachers.

Community school districts, the High School Division, and the Division of Special Education all need to improve their monitoring and attendance outreach services for homeless children and youth. In some cases, their data is not current. In other cases, there is no follow-up when students are truant, especially for children attending out of district schools, students in "Citywide" programs, and high school students.

These problems require better coordination and communication between the Central Board, Community School District Coordinators, the High School Division, and the

Division of Special Education. Every effort must to made to improve follow-up services, before children drop out of school and place their future well being in total jeopardy.

To compensate for the disruptions associated with homelessness and its ancillary problems, homeless children need more than equal access to the classroom (cf. Eddowes & Hranitz, 1989; Gewirtzman & Fodor, 1987; Horowitz, Springer, & Kose, 1988; National Association of State Coordinators for Homeless Children and Youth, 1990). Supplementary supportive services are needed to address the educational, social, and psychological needs of homeless children. Ancillary services which would facilitate academic success include tutoring and/or remedial education services to address academic deficits, after-school and extended day programs to provide recreation and tutorial services, counseling and psychological services to respond to emotional conflicts and needs, additional meal programs, sensitivity of school personnel, and activities geared toward parental training, education, and involvement. Unfortunately, these support services are only rarely provided.

Finally, children in domestic violence shelters, and children from Westchester families who are sheltered in New York City, receive none of the services provided to other homeless students, because they are not considered to be "homeless" by the New York City Board.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

At the very least, the mandates set forth in the McKinney Act need to be enforced if continuity of educational services are to be achieved. In addition, local educational agencies must be represented at emergency shelter facilities to locate and identify new arrivals in order to minimize the disruption in education. Parents need to be informed of their educational rights, and involved in the decision of whether their children should continue attending their former schools or transfer to local schools. For children who

continue to attend their former schools, transportation problems need to be expeditiously resolved, attendance needs to be monitored, and follow-up services provided if attendance is not satisfactory. For children who transfer to local schools, placement in appropriate educational settings must be made with a minimum of delay. There must be more efficient procedures for transferring student records. Special attention must be paid to students from outside New York City, bilingual students, and children who need special educational services.

Once children are attending school, support services to improve their academic success are provided. In many cases, children cannot benefit from schooling because the school does not provide the necessary services to respond to their pressing needs, and ensure their success in school. Barriers to available programs, including after-school, food programs, and summer programs must be removed. In addition, additional services must be implemented if we are to make a difference in the lives of America's homeless children and youth.

Schools can play a significant role in meeting the needs of homeless children by providing an environment that supports their physical, emotional, and social development. With strong state leadership in assisting with the process of local review and revision of policies and practices that are barriers for homeless students, homeless children can have a chance. At the very least, we owe this to our children without homes.

REFERENCES

Angel, R., & Worobey, J. (1988). Single motherhood and children's health. Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 29, 38-52.

Bassuk, E. L., & Rosenberg, L. (1988). Why does family homelessness occur? A case-control study. American Journal of Public Health, 78(7), 783-788.

Bassuk, E. L., & Rubin, L. (1987). Homeless children: A neglected population. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 57(2), 279-286.

Blasi, G. L. (1990). Social policy and social science research on homelessness. Journal of Social Issues, 46(4), 207-219.

Bowen, J., Purrington, G., Layton, D., & O'Brien, K. (1989, March). Educating homeless children and youth: A policy analysis. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Bowen, J., Purrington, G., & O'Brien, K. (1990, April). Educating homeless children and youth: An analysis of state policies and plans. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, MA.

Brett, J. M. (1980). The effect of job transfer on employees and their families. In C. L. Cooper & R. Payne (Eds.), Current concerns in occupational stress (pp. 99-136). New York, Wiley.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1974). A report on longitudinal evaluations of early childhood programs. Vol. 2. Is early intervention effective? (DHEW Publication No. OHD 74-24). Washington, DC: Office of Child Development.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The ecology of human development. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Byrnes, D., & Yamamoto, K. (1986). Views on grade retention. Journal of Research and Development in Education, 20(10, 14-20.

California State Department of Education (1989). Hope for the future: The state plan for educating homeless children and youth. Sacramento, CA: Author.

Center for Law and Education (1987). Homelessness: A barrier to education for thousands of children. Newsnotes, 38. Cambridge, MA: Author.

Center for Law and Education (1990). State plans for the education of homeless children and youth: A selected survey of thirty-five states. Cambridge, MA: Author.

Center for Law and Education (1991). Supplement to material on the education of homeless children. Cambridge, MA: Author.

Childrens Defense Fund (1990). S.O.S. America: A children's defense budget. Washington, DC: Author.

Citizens Committee for Children (1988). Children in storage: Families in New York City's barracks-style shelters. New York: Author.

City of New York (1990). Federal program: 101st Congress. New York: Author.

Comer, J. P. (1984). Home/school relationships as they affect the academic success of children. Education and Urban Society, 16(3), 323-327.

Community Food Resource Center (1989). Who are New York City's hungry? New York: Author.

Cuomo, M. M. (1987). The state role--New York State's approach to homelessness. In R. D. Bingham, R. E. Green, & S. B. White (Eds.), The homeless in contemporary society (pp. 199-215). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Dehavenon, A. L., Benker, K., & Boone, M. S. (1990). The tyranny of indifference: A study of hunger, homelessness, poor health and family dismemberment in 1325 New York City households with children in 1989-1990. New York: The Action Research Project.

Dodge, K. (1990). Developmental Psychopathology in children of depressed mothers. Developmental Psychology, 26(1), 3-6.

Dumpson, J. R. & Dinkins, D. N. (1987). A shelter is not a home: Report of the Manhattan Borough President's task force on housing for homeless families. New York: Author.

Eddowes, A., & Hranitz, J. (1989). Childhood education: Infancy through early adolescence. Journal of the Association for Childhood Education International, 65(4), 197-200.

Felner, R. D., Primavera, J. & Cauce, A. M. (1981). The impact of school transitions: A focus for preventive efforts. American Journal of Community Psychology, 9(4), 449-459.

Fried, M. (1963). Grieving for a lost home. In L. J. Duhl (Ed.), The urban condition (pp. 151-171). New York: Basic.

Gewirtzman, R., & Fodor, I. (1987). The homeless child at school: From welfare hotel to classroom. Child Welfare, 66(3), 237-245.

Hess, G. A. (1987). Schools for early failure: The elementary years and dropout rates in Chicago. IL: Chicago Panel on Public School Finances.

Henderson, A. (1988). The evidence continues to grow: Parent involvement improves student achievement. An annotated bibliography. Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Holmes, T., & Matthews, K. (1984). The effects of nonpromotion on elementary and junior high school pupils: A meta-analysis. Review of Educational Research, 54, 232-242.

Horowitz, S., Springer, C., & Kose, G. (1988). Stress in hotel children: The effects of homelessness on attitudes toward school. Children's Environments Quarterly, 5(1), 34-36.

Institute of Medicine (1988). Homelessness, health, and human needs. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Interagency Council on the Homeless (1989). The McKinney Act: A program guide. Washington, DC: Author.

Kantor, M. B. ((1965). Mobility and mental health. Springfield, IL: Thomas.

Kiesler, C. A. (1991). Homelessness and public policy priorities. American Psychologist, 46, 1245-1252.

Labaree, D. F. (1984). Setting the standard: Alternative policies for student promotion. Harvard Educational Review, 54(1), 67-87.

Levine, M., Wesolowski, J. C., & Corbett, F. J. (1966). Pupil turnover and academic performance in an inner city elementary school. Psychology in the Schools, 3, 153-156.

Mann, D. (1986). Can we help drop-outs: Thinking about the undoable. Teachers College Record, 87.

Massachusetts Department of Education (1990). State plan to address the educational needs of homeless children and youth. Quincy, MA: Author.

Masten, A. S. (1990, August). Homeless children: Risk, trauma and adjustment. Paper presented at the 98th annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Boston, MA.

Maza, P. L., & Hall, J. A. (1988). Homeless children and their families: A preliminary study. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.

McChesney, K. Y. (1990). Family homeless: A systemic problem. Journal of Social Issues, 46(4), 191-205.

Mihaly, L. (1991). Homeless families with children: Beyond the numbers. In J. H. Kryder-Coe, L. M. Salamon, & J. M. Molnar (Eds.), Homeless children and youth: A new american dilemma, (pp 11-32). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Molnar, J., Bittel, C., Hartman, A., & Klein, T. (1989, November). Curriculum considerations for optimally supporting the needs of homeless children in early childhood environments. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Atlanta, GA.

Molnar, J., Rath, W., & Klein, T. (1991). Constantly compromised: The impact of homelessness on children. Journal of Social Issues, 46(4), 109-124.

Molnar, J., & Rubin, D. H. (1991, March) The impact of homelessness on children: Review of prior studies and implications for future research. Paper presented at the NIMH/NIAAA research conference organized by the Better Homes Foundation, Cambridge, MA.

Nann, R. (1982). Uprooting and surviving. Boston, MA: Reidel Publishing.

National Alliance to End Homelessness (1988). Housing and homelessness. Washington, DC: Author

National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (1990). Position document on the re-authorization of Subtitle VII-B of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. Austin, TX: Department of Education.

National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (1991a). Homeless not hopeless: Ensuring educational opportunity for America's homeless children and youth. Austin, TX: Department of Education.

National Association of State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (1991b). McKinney Amendments of 1990: Reauthorization Highlights. Homeless Education Beam. Austin, TX: Department of Education.

National Center for Children in Poverty (1990). Five million children: A statistical profile of our poorest young citizens. New York: Author.

National Coalition for the Homeless (1987a). Broken lives: Denial of education to homeless children. Washington, DC: Author.

National Coalition for the Homeless (1987b). Homelessness in the United States: Background and federal response. A briefing paper for Presidential candidates. Washington, DC: Author.

National Coalition for the Homeless (1987c). Pushed out: America's homeless--Thanksgiving 1987. Washington, DC: Author.

National Coalition for the Homeless (1989a). Unfinished business: The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act after two years. Washington, DC: Author.

National Coalition for the Homeless (1989b). American nightmare: A decade of homelessness in the United States. Washington, DC: Author.

National Coalition for the Homeless (1991, February). Homelessness and the fiscal year 1992 federal budget. Washington, DC: Author.

National Coalition of Advocates for Students (1991). The food common school: Making the vision work for all children. Boston, MA: Author.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (1990a). Shut out: Denial of education to homeless children. Washington, DC: Author.

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (1990b). Stuck at the shelter: Homeless children and the District of Columbia school system. Washington, DC: Author.

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (1991). Small steps: An update on the education of homeless children and youth program. Washington, DC: Author.

New York City Board of Education (1990). Students in temporary housing. New York City: Office of Research, Evaluation and Assessment.

New York City Board of Education (1991). Attendance report (5/7/91). New York City: Office of Educational Data Services.

New York City Department of Health (1986). Discussion paper of congregate family shelters and public health. Unpublished manuscript. New York: Author.

New York City Human Resources Administration (1990, March). Homeless family census (HOMES) report). New York: Author.

New York State Council on Children and Families (1984). Meeting the needs of homeless youth: A report of the homeless youth steering committee. Albany, NY: Author.

New York State Education Department (1988). Amendment to Section 100.2 of the regulations of the commissioner of education pursuant to Sections 207, 305, 3202, and 3205 of the Education Law relating to the education of homeless children. Albany, NY: Author.

New York State Education Department (1989). The New York state plan for the education of homeless children and youth. Albany, NY: Author.

New York State Education Department (1990, December). Status report: Education of homeless children and youth under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education.

New York State Education Department (1991). The New York state plan for the education of homeless children and youth. Albany, NY: Author.

Partnership for the Homeless (1989). Moving forward: A national agenda to address homelessness in 1990 and beyond. New York: Author.

Pennsylvania Department of Education (1989). Pennsylvania's homeless student initiative: A series of models for effective coordination between schools and shelters. Harrisburg, PA: Author.

Peterson, A. C., & Crockett, L. (1985). Pubertal timing and grade effects on adjustment. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 14, 191-206.

Practising Law Institute (1988). The rights of the homeless. Litigation course handbook Series #366. New York: Author.

Rafferty, Y. (1990). Testimony presented before the U. S. House of Representatives Committee on Government Operations. Mismanagement in programs for the homeless in Washington, D.C. (pp. 21-31). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Rafferty, Y. (1991). Developmental and educational consequences of homelessness on children and youth. In J. H. Kryder-Coe, L. M. Salamon, & J. M. Molnar (Eds.), Homeless children and youth: A new american dilemma. (pp. 105-139). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Rafferty, Y., & Rollins, N. (1989). Learning in limbo: The educational deprivation of homeless children. Long Island City, NY: Advocates for Children. (ERIC Document Reproduction No. ED 312 363).

Rafferty, Y., & Shinn, M. (1991). The impact of homelessness on children. American Psychologist, 46, 1170-1179.

Rescorla, L., Parker, R. & Stolley, P. (1991). Ability, achievement, and adjustment in homeless children. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 61(2), 210-220.

Rossi, P. H. (1990. The old homelessness and the new homelessness in historical perspective. American Psychologist, 45, 954-959.

Roth, L., & Fox, E. R. (1988, November). Children of homeless families: Health status and access to health care. Paper presented at the 116th meeting of the American Public Health Association, Boston, MA.

Robertson, M. J. (1991). Homeless youth: An overview of recent literature. In J. H. Kryder-Coe, L. M. Salamon, & J. M. Molnar (Eds.), Homeless children and youth: A new american dilemma. (pp. 33-68). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Rutter, M. (1990). Commentary: Some focus and process considerations regarding effects of parental depression on children. Developmental Psychology, 26(1), 60-67.

Santini, S. (1991). The collaborative journey home. Albany, NY: The New York State School Boards Association.

Simpson, J., Kilduff, M., & Blewett, C. D. (1984). Struggling to survive in a welfare hotel. New York: Community Service Society.

Stokols, D. & Shumaker, S. A. (1982). The psychological context of residential mobility and well-being. Journal of Social Issues, 38(3), 149-171.

Syme, S. L., Hyman, M. M., & Enterline, P. E. (1965). Cultural mobility and the occurrence of coronary heart disease. Journal of Health and Human Behavior, 6, 178-185.

Texas State Department of Education (1989). State plan for educating homeless children and youth. Austin, TX: Author

U. S. Conference of Mayors (1988). A status report on the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987. Washington, DC: Author.

U. S. Conference of Mayors (1989). A status report on hunger and homelessness in America's cities -- A 27-city survey. Washington, DC: Author.

U. S. Department of Education (February 15, 1989). Report to Congress on state interim reports on the education of homeless children. Washington, DC: Author.

U. S. Department of Education (March 29, 1990). Report to Congress on state interim reports on the education of homeless children. Washington, DC: Author.

U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (1991, May). Homeless families with children: Programmatic responses to five communities. Washington, DC: Author.

U. S. General Accounting Office (1989). Homeless children and youths. Report to congressional committees. (GAO/PEMD-89-14). Washington, DC: Author.

U. S. General Accounting Office (1990). Homelessness: Access to McKinney Act programs improved but better oversight needed. Report to Chairman, subcommittee on housing and urban affairs, committee on banking, housing and urban affairs, U.S. Senate. (#RCED-91-21). Washington, DC: Author.

Walker, E. & Madhere, S. (1987). Multiple retentions: Some consequences for the cognitive and affective maturation of minority elementary students. Urban Education, 22(1), 85-95.

Wasem, R. E. (1991, March). Homelessness: Issues and legislation in the 102d Congress. Congressional Research Services, Issue Brief IB88070, U.S. Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Wood, D., Hayashi, T., Schlossman, S., & Valdez, R. B. (1989). Over the brink: Homeless families in Los Angeles. Sacramento, CA: State Assembly Office of Research, Box 942849.

Wood, D., Valdez, R. B., Hayashi, T., & Shen, A. (1990a). The health of homeless children: A comparison study. Pediatrics, 86, 858-866.

Appendix A

On November 29, 1990, President Bush signed into law the McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments of 1990 (P. L. 101-645). The portion of the McKinney Act related to the education of homeless children and youth, Subtitle VII-B, was substantially altered by Title VI of the amendments. The following is a reproduction of the Act, as amended, based upon the revisions indicated in the Congressional Record, Volume 136, No. 148--Part II, October 25, 1990.

STEWART B. MCKINNEY HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT
SUBTITLE VII-B (Sections 721-722)
as amended November 29, 1990

Section 721.Statement of Policy.

It is the policy of the Congress that–

(1) each State educational agency shall assure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth have access to a free, appropriate public education which would be provided to the children of a resident of a State and is consistent with the State school attendance laws;

(2) in any State that has a residency requirement as a component of its compulsory attendance laws or other laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and homeless youth, the State will review and undertake steps to revise such laws, regulations, practices, or policies to assure that the children of homeless individuals and homeless youth are afforded a free and appropriate public education; and

(3) homelessness alone should not be sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment.

Section 722.Grants for State and Local Activities for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.–The Secretary of Education is, in accordance with the provisions of this section, authorized to make grants to States to carry out the activities described in subsections (c), (d), and (e).

(b) ALLOCATION.–From the amounts appropriated for each fiscal year pursuant to subsection (g), the Secretary shall allot to each State an amount which bears the same ratio to the amount appropriated in each such year as the amount allocated under part A of chapter 1 of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to the local educational agencies in the State in that year bears to the total amount allocated to such agencies in all States, except that no State shall receive less than $50,000. The Secretary shall reserve 0.1 percent of the amount appropriated for each fiscal year to be allocated by the Secretary among the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Palau (until the Compact of Free Association with Palau takes effect pursuant to section 101(a) of Public Law 90-658), according to their respective need, as determined by the Secretary, except that no such territory shall receive less in fiscal year 1991 than it received in fiscal year 1990. The Secretary may also reserve not to exceed 1 percent of the amount appropriated for each fiscal year for programs for Indian students served by schools funded by the Secretary of the Interior, as determined under the Indian Self-

Determination and Education Assistance Act consistent with the purposes of this Act. As used in this subsection, the term 'State' shall not include the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or Palau.

(c) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.--Grants under this section shall be used--

(1) to carry out the policies set forth in section 721 in the State;

(2) to provide activities for and services to homeless children and homeless youths that enable such children and youths to enroll in, attend, and achieve success in school;

(3) to establish or designate an Office of Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth in accordance with subsection (d);

(4) to prepare and carry out the State plan described in subsection (e);

(5) to develop and implement programs for school personnel to heighten awareness of specific problems of the education of homeless children and youth; and

(6) if amounts appropriated for the applicable fiscal year exceed the amount appropriated for fiscal year 1990 under this section, to provide grants to local educational agencies for purposes of this section, and if such amounts appropriated do not exceed the amount appropriated for fiscal year 1990, the State education agency, at the discretion of such agency, may provide such grants.

(d) FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE OF COORDINATOR.--The Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth established in each State shall--

(1) once every two years gather data on the number and location of homeless children and youth in the State, and such data gathering shall include the number of homeless children and homeless youths enrolled in schools in the State, determined through random sampling or other statistical methods that ensure that such children and youths are not overtly identified as being homeless, the nature and extent of problems of access to, and placement of, homeless children and homeless youth in elementary and secondary schools, the difficulties in identifying the special needs of such children, and any progress made by the State educational agency and local educational agencies within the State in addressing such problems and difficulties;

(2) develop and carry out the State plan described in subsection (e);

(3) prepare and submit to the Secretary not later than December 31, 1991, and on December 31 of every second year thereafter a report on the data gathered pursuant to paragraph (1);

To the extent that reliable current data is available in the State, each coordinator described in this subsection may use such data to fulfill the requirements of paragraph (1).

(4) facilitate coordination between the State education agency, the State social services agency, and other agencies providing services to homeless children and youth and their families; and

(5) develop relationships and coordinate with other relevant education, child development, or preschool programs and providers of services to homeless children, homeless families, and runaway and homeless youths (including domestic violence agencies, shelter operators, transitional housing facilities, runaway and homeless youth centers, and transitional living programs for homeless youths) in order to improve the provision of comprehensive services to homeless children and homeless youths and the families of such children and youths.

(e) STATE PLAN.--

(1) Each State shall adopt a plan to provide for the education of each homeless child or homeless youth within the State which will contain provisions designed to--

(A) authorize the State educational agency, the local educational agency, the parent or guardian of the homeless child, the homeless youth, or the applicable social worker to make the determinations required under this section;

(B) provide procedures for the prompt resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youth;

(C) develop programs for school personnel (including principals, attendance officers, teachers, and enrollment personnel), to heighten the awareness of such personnel of the specific educational needs of runaway and homeless youths; and

(D) ensure that homeless children and homeless youths who meet the relevant eligibility criteria are able to participate in Federal, State, or local food programs;

(E) ensure that homeless children and homeless youths who meet the relevant eligibility criteria are able to participate in Federal, State, or local before- and after-school care programs and provide for the disclosure of data concerning the participation of such children in such programs in plans submitted by the State after the initial plan of the State;

(F) address problems set forth in the report provided to the Secretary under subsection (d)(3);

(G) address problems with respect to the education of homeless children and homeless youths including problems caused by

(i) transportation issues; and

(ii) enrollment delays which are caused by--

(I) immunization requirements;

(II) residency requirements;

(III) lack of birth certificates, school records, or other documentation; or

(IV) guardianship issues;

(H) demonstrate that the State and local educational agencies in the State have developed and will review and revise policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and homeless youths in schools of the State; and

(I) ensure that the State educational agency and local educational agencies within the State will adopt policies and practices to ensure that homeless children and homeless youths are not isolated or stigmatized.

(2) Each plan adopted under this subsection shall assure to the extent practicable under requirements relating to education established by State law, that local educational agencies within the State will comply with the requirements of paragraphs (3) through (9).

(3) (A) The local educational agency of each homeless child and each homeless youth shall either--

(i) continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin

(I) for the remainder of the academic year; or

(II) in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years, for the following academic year; or

(ii) enroll the child or youth in any school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend;

whichever is in the child's best interest or the youth's best interest.

(B) In determining the best interests of the child or youth for purposes of making a school assignment under paragraph (A), consideration shall be given to a request made by a parent regarding school selection.

(C) For purposes of this paragraph, the term "school of origin" shall mean the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

(4) The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth is living with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere by the parents.

(5) Each homeless child shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected according to the provisions of paragraph (3), including transportation services, educational services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria, such as compensatory educational programs for the disadvantaged, and educational programs for the handicapped and for students with limited English proficiency; programs in vocational education; programs for the gifted and talented; and school meal programs.

(6) Any record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs of each homeless child or youth shall be maintained--

(A) so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school district; and

(B) in a manner consistent with section 438 of the General Education Provisions Act.

(7) Each local educational agency serving homeless children or youth that receives assistance under this title shall coordinate with local social service agencies, and other agencies or programs providing services to such children or youth and their families.

(8) Each local educational agency that receives assistance under this title shall designate a homelessness liaison to ensure that--

(A) homeless children and youth enroll and succeed in the schools of that agency; and

(B) homeless families, children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.

State coordinators and local educational agency liaisons shall inform school personnel, service providers and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the liaisons.

(9) Each State and local educational agency shall review and revise any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youth in schools selected in accordance with paragraph (3). In reviewing and revising such policies, consideration shall be given to issues concerning transportation, requirements of immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records, or other documentation, and guardianship. Special attention shall be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless children and youths who are not currently attending school.

(f) APPLICATION.--No State may receive a grant under this section unless the State educational agency submits an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing or accompanied by such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.--

(1) There are authorized to be appropriated $50,000,000 for fiscal year 1991, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 1992 and 1993.

(2) The State educational agency may reserve not to exceed 5 percent of the amount received by such agency under this section in each fiscal year, or an amount equal to the amount received by such State agency for State activities under this section in fiscal year 1990, whichever is greater, to conduct activities under paragraphs (1) through (5) of subsection (c).

(3) (A) In any fiscal year in which the amount appropriated under paragraph (1) does not equal or exceed $100,000,000 the State educational agency shall use funds not otherwise reserved under paragraph (2) to award grants to local educational agencies in accordance with subsection (c)(6).

(B) In any fiscal year in which the amount appropriated under paragraph (1) equals or exceeds $100,000,000, the State educational agency shall use funds not otherwise reserved under paragraph (2) to allocate to each local educational agency an amount that bears the same ratio to amount not otherwise reserved as the aggregate amount received by such local educational agency under part A of chapter 1 of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 for such fiscal year bears to the aggregate amount received by all local educational agencies in the State for purposes of carrying out such part for such fiscal year.

(4) Sums appropriated in each fiscal year shall remain available for the succeeding fiscal year.

Section 723. Local Educational Agency Grants for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.–

(1) Grantees and purpose of grants.-- The State educational agency shall, in accordance with section 722(c)(6) and from amounts made available to such agency under section 722, make grants to local educational agencies for the purpose of facilitating the enrollment, attendance and success of homeless children and youths in schools.

(2) Use of grants.-- Unless otherwise specified, services under paragraph (1) may be provided through programs on school grounds or at other nonsectarian facilities. Where services are provided through programs on school grounds, such services may also be made available to children or youths who are determined by the local educational agency to be at risk of failing in or dropping out of schools, except that priority for such services shall be given to homeless children and homeless youths. To the maximum extent practicable, services shall be provided through existing programs and mechanisms that integrate homeless individuals with nonhomeless individuals.

(3) Regular academic program.-- Services provided under this section are not intended to replace the regular academic program.

(b) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.–

(1) Primary activities.-- Not less than 50 percent of amounts provided under a grant under this section shall be used to provide tutoring, remedial education services, or other education services to homeless children or homeless youths.

(2) Related activities.-- Not less than 35, nor more than 50, percent of amounts provided under a grant under this section may be used for activities that may include--

(A) the provision of expedited evaluations of the strengths and needs of homeless children and homeless youths, including needs and eligibility for programs and services (including gifted and talented programs, special education programs, programs for students with limited English proficiency, and remedial services);

(B) professional development for educators and other school personnel that is designed to develop awareness and sensitivity to the needs of homeless children and homeless youths and the rights of such children and youths under this Act;

(C) the provision of referral services to homeless children and homeless youths for medical, dental, mental, and other health services;

(D) the provision of assistance to defray the excess cost of transportation for students not provided under section 722(e)(5) and not otherwise provided through Federal, State, or local funding, where necessary to enable students to attend the school selected under section 722 (e)(3);

(E) the provision of developmentally appropriate early childhood programs for preschool age children;

(F) the provision of before- and after-school and summer programs for homeless children or homeless youths in which a teacher or other qualified individual provides tutoring, homework assistance, and supervision of educational activities;

(G) where necessary, the payment of fees and other costs associated with tracking, obtaining, and transferring records necessary to enroll homeless children or homeless youths in school, including birth certificates, immunization records, academic records, guardianship records, and evaluations for special programs or services;

(H) the provision of parent education and training to the parents of homeless children and homeless youths about the rights of and resources available to such children and youths;

(I) the development of coordination between schools and agencies providing services to homeless children and homeless youths;

(J) the provision of counseling, social work and psychological services, including violence counseling, and referrals for such services;

(K) activities to address the particular needs of homeless children and homeless youths that may arise from domestic violence;

(L) activities to develop and implement programs for school personnel to heighten the awareness of such personnel of the specific educational needs of runaway and homeless youths;

(M) the adaptation of space and the purchase of supplies for nonschool facilities made available under subsection (a)(2) to provide services under this subsection;

(N) the provision of school supplies to be distributed at the shelter or temporary housing facilities; and

(O) the provision of such other extraordinary or emergency assistance determined by the Secretary as essential to enable homeless children and youth to attend school.

(3) Eligibility.– No State or local educational agency may receive a grant under this section unless the State in which the agency is located has submitted a State plan as required by section 722(e).

(c) AWARDS.–

(1) Basis.– Except as provided in section 722(g)(3)(B), from amounts appropriated for each fiscal year under section 722(g), the State educational agency may award grants under this section to local educational agencies submitting an application under subsection (d) on the basis of the need of such agencies.

(2) Determination.– In determining need under paragraph (1), the State educational agency may consider the number of homeless children and homeless youth enrolled in preschool, elementary, and secondary schools within the area served by the agency, and shall consider the needs of such children and youth, and the ability of the agency to meet such needs. Such agency may also consider–

(A) the extent to which the proposed use of funds would facilitate the enrollment, retention, and educational success of homeless children and youth;

(B) the extent to which the application reflects coordination with other local and State agencies that serve homeless children and youth, as well as the State Plan required by section 722(e);

(C) the extent to which the applicant exhibits in the application and in current practice a commitment to education of all homeless children and youth in its jurisdiction; and

(D) other criteria as the agency determines appropriate.

(d) APPLICATION.–

(1) In general.– A local educational agency that desires to receive a grant under this section shall submit an application to the State educational agency at such time, in such manner, and containing or accompanied by such information as the State agency may reasonably require according to guidelines issued by the Secretary. Each such application shall include–

(A) a description of the services and programs for which assistance is sought and the problems sought to be addressed through the provision of such services and programs;

(B) assurances that the applicant complies with or will use requested funds to come into compliance with paragraphs (3) through (9) of section 722(e);

(C) an assurance that assistance under the grant will supplement and not supplant funds used before the award of the grant for purposes of providing services to homeless children and homeless youths; and

(D) a description of policies and procedures that the agency will implement to ensure that activities carried out by the agency will not isolate or stigmatize homeless children and homeless youth.

(3)[sic] Term of Awards.– Grants awarded under this section shall be for terms not to exceed 2 years.

(e) REPORTS.– Each State educational agency that receives a grant under this section for any fiscal year shall, as part of the plan of the State submitted under section 722(e)(4), provide to Secretary data concerning–

(1) the number of homeless children and homeless youths served with assistance provided under the grant under this section; and

(2) a description of the success of the program under this section in allowing homeless children and homeless youths to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school.

Section 724. National Responsibilities

(a) GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE.– The Comptroller General of the United States shall prepare and submit to the Congress not later than June 30, 1988, a report on the number of homeless children and youth in all States.

(b) SECRETARIAL RESPONSIBILITIES.–

(1) The Secretary shall monitor and review compliance with the provisions of this subtitle in accordance with the provisions of the General Education Provisions Act. In reviewing the State plans submitted by the State educational agencies under section 722(e), the Secretary shall evaluate whether State laws, policies, and practices described in such plans adequately address the problems of homeless children and homeless youth relating to access to education and placement as described in such plans.

(2) (A) The Secretary, in consultation with persons and organizations that are knowledgeable about the needs of homeless children and youth, shall, through the awarding of a grant, or through entering into a contract or cooperative agreement, conduct a study to determine the best means of identifying, locating, and counting homeless children and youth for the purposes of this subtitle. Such persons and organizations to be consulted shall include representatives of State coordinators, local educational agencies with substantial numbers of homeless children and youth, local government agencies with responsibility for administering homeless shelters, and advocacy groups representing the interests of homeless children and youth. The Secretary shall also consult with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, as appropriate, in carrying out this paragraph.

(B) The study conducted under subparagraph (A) shall consider--

(i) the appropriate definition of the terms 'homeless child' and 'homeless youth';

(ii) the experience of the 1990 Census in identifying, locating, and counting homeless children and youth;

(iii) appropriate methodologies for identifying, locating, and counting such children and youth, including using schools, shelters, and other social service agencies to collect data; and

(iv) the projected accuracy of the methodologies identified in clause (iii), and the costs associated with the use of each methodology;

to determine the number of homeless children and youth in the United States to create as accurate an account as possible of the number, location, and living circumstances of such children and youth, including the number of such children and youth that are attending school regularly, part-time, or not at all, and reasons for the nonattendance of such children and youth.

(C) (i) Not later than 240 days after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the Secretary shall prepare and submit, to the appropriate committees of Congress, a report containing the results of the study conducted under subparagraph (A) and estimated costs of making the estimates required under clause (ii).

(ii) Not later than December 1, 1992, the Secretary, in consultation with the appropriate committees of Congress, and through the use of appropriate statistical methodology, shall, through a grant, contract or cooperative agreement, determine accurate estimates of the number of homeless children and youth throughout the Nation and the number of such children and youth attending school.

(D) The Secretary may reserve not more than $250,000 from amounts appropriated under section 722(g) in 1991 to carry out the study required under subparagraph (A).

(E) There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary in 1992 to prepare the report and estimates required under subparagraph (C).

(3) The Secretary shall provide such support and technical assistance to the State educational agencies as is required by such agencies to carry out their responsibilities under this subtitle.

(4) The Secretary shall prepare and submit a report to the Congress on the programs and activities authorized by this subtitle at the end of each fiscal year.

(5) The Secretary shall compile and submit a report to the Congress containing the information received from the States pursuant to section 722(d)(3) within 45 days of its receipt.

(5) [sic] The Secretary shall conduct evaluation and dissemination activities of programs designed to meet the educational needs of homeless elementary and secondary school students.

(6) The Secretary shall require applications for grants under this subtitle to be submitted to the Secretary not later than the expiration of the 60-day period beginning on the date that funds are appropriated for purposes of making such grants and shall make such grants not later than the expiration of the 120-day period beginning on such date.

(7) The Secretary, based on the information received from the States and information gathered by the Secretary under paragraph (1), shall determine the extent to which State educational agencies are ensuring that each homeless child and homeless youth has access to a free appropriate education as described in section 721(1).

Section 725. Reports.

Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Comptroller General of the United States, in consultation with the Secretary, shall prepare and submit to the appropriate Committees of Congress a report containing the findings of a study conducted to determine the most effective method of distributing funds provided under this subtitle to State educational agencies and local educational agencies.

Section 726. Definitions.

As used in this subtitle--

(1) the term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Education; and

(2) the term "State" means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

APPENDIX B
NEW YORK STATE COMMISSIONER'S REGULATION
(Section 100.2(x) and (y) of Title 8, NYCRR
EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

(x) *Education of homeless children.* (1) As used in this subdivision:

(i) *Homeless child* means a child entitled to attend school in the State of New York who, because of the unavailability of permanent housing, is living in a hotel, motel, shelter, or other temporary living arrangement in a situation in which the child or his or her family is receiving assistance and/or services from a local social services district, provided that the definition of homeless child shall exclude a child who has been placed by a court with, or whose custody has been transferred to, an authorized agency, as defined in section 371(10) of the Social Services Law, or the Division for Youth.

(ii) *School district of last attendance* means the school district within the State of New York in which the homeless child was attending a public school on a tuition-free basis when circumstances arose which caused such child to become homeless, or if not so attending, the school district in which the homeless child was entitled to attend school, or would have been entitled to attend school upon reaching school age.

(iii) *School district of current location* means the school district within the State of New York in which the hotel, motel, shelter, or other temporary housing arrangement of a homeless child is located.

(2) The parent of or person in parental relation to a homeless child, or the homeless child if no parent or person in parental relation is available, may designate either the school district of current location or the school district of last attendance as the district in which such child shall attend upon instruction.

(i) Such designation shall be made on a form specified by the commissioner within a reasonable time after the child enters a new temporary housing arrangement, and except as otherwise provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, shall remain in effect for so long as such child remains in such temporary housing arrangement.

(ii) Prior to the end of the first semester of attendance or within 60 days of commencing attendance at a school pursuant to a designation made in accordance with this paragraph or in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (3) of this subdivision, whichever occurs later, the parent, person in parental relation, or child, as appropriate, may change the designation to the district of current location or to the district of last attendance, or, if applicable in accordance with paragraph (3) of this subdivision, to a school district participating in a regional placement plan, if the parent, person in parental relation or child finds the original designation to be educationally unsound.

(3) Whether a homeless child attends school in the district of current location, in the district of last attendance, or, if applicable in accordance with paragraph (3) of this subdivision, in a school district participating in regional placement plan, such child shall be considered as a resident of such district for all purposes, provided that nothing herein shall be construed to require the board of education of the school district of last attendance or of a school district providing services pursuant to a regional placement plan to transport a child from a location outside such district to the school the child attends within such district.

(4) The parent of or person in parental relation to a homeless child in a temporary housing arrangement as of the effective date of this subdivision, or the homeless child if no parent or person in parental relation is available, shall be entitled to designate either the school district of temporary location or the school district of last attendance as the school district the child will attend, and to change such designation in the manner prescribed in subparagraph (2)(ii) of this subdivision.

(5) In addition to the options set forth in paragraph (2) of this subdivision, the parent of or person in parental relation to a homeless child, or the homeless child if no parent or person in parental relation is available, may voluntarily enroll the child, in accordance with a regional placement plan approved by the commissioner, in a public school of any school district participating in the regional placement plan.

(i) A regional placement plan shall be submitted on behalf of all school districts participating in the plan by at least one such school district or by at least one board of cooperative educational services serving such districts, and shall be accompanied by copies of the resolutions of the boards of education of each school district participating in the plan authorizing the participation of such school districts.

(ii) In order to qualify for approval by the commissioner, a regional placement plan shall provide a comprehensive regional approach to the provision of educational placements for homeless children. Each such plan shall contain all information specified by the commissioner.

(y) *Determination of student residency.* The board of education or its designee shall determine whether a child is entitled to attend the schools of the district. Any decision by a school official, other than the board or its designee, that a child is not entitled to attend the schools of the district shall include notification of the procedures to obtain review of the decision within the school district. Prior to making a determination of entitlement to attend the schools of the district, the board or its designee shall afford the child's parent, the person in parental relation to the child or the child, as appropriate, the opportunity to submit information concerning the child's right to attend school in the district. When the board of education or its designee determines that a child is not entitled to attend the schools of such district because such child is neither a resident of such district nor entitled to attend its schools pursuant to subdivision (x) of this section, such board or its designee shall, within two business days, provide written notice of its determination to the child's parent, to the person in parental relation to the child, or to the child, as appropriate. Such written notice shall state:

(1) that the child is not entitled to attend the public schools of the district;

(2) the basis for the determination that the child is neither a resident of the school district nor entitled to attend its schools pursuant to subdivision (x) of this section;

(3) the date as of which the child will be excluded from the schools of the district; and

(4) that the determination of the board may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education, in accordance with Education Law, section 310, within 30 days of the date of the determination, and that the procedure for taking such an appeal may be obtained from the Office of Counsel, New York State Education Department, State Education Building, Albany, NY 12234.

APPENDIX C

CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Regulation of the Chancellor

Category: STUDENTS

No.: A-780

Subject: STUDENTS IN TEMPORARY HOUSING

Page: 1 of 2

Issued: 5/27/87

ABSTRACT

The school system is the agency responsible for educating children and as such should be the chief advocate in providing and coordinating services for children residing in temporary housing. Such children should not be stigmatized because of where they live.

Continuity of instruction is of paramount importance. Accordingly, instruction is to be continued at the parent's option at a school selected by the parent in accordance with this regulation. The child should be educated in an integrated setting which is appropriate to his/her educational needs.

SERVICES

These services apply to Districts where there is a "critical mass" of students in temporary housing. Children residing in temporary shelters should receive comprehensive services throughout the school day including: wake-up calls, transporation, breakfast, lunch, dinner, extended day enrichment activities, health services, daily attendance monitoring, guidance, and recreation.

SERVICE COORDINATION

It is the responsibility of the District to fully coordinate services for these children. A comprehensive approach should be taken using all available resources. The District should engage in joint planning with community-based organizations and other City agencies to ensure integrated services.

PLACEMENT AND COUNSELING

The District should provide counseling and placement services for each individual child:

1. Whenever a student is relocated to temporary housing he/she shall be given the option of remaining in his/her previous school or the school he/she attended while residing in permanent housing.

2. If the student chooses to accept a local placement in the new district, the district shall place the student in the school to which the temporary residence is zoned.
3. Notwithstanding the above, if a student's needs indicate placement in a special program (i.e., Gifted and Talented, Bilingual Program) the district is to place the student in an appropriate program which provides the indicated instructional services.
4. Students should be integrated in classes and school programs.
5. Exceptions to numbers 2-4 above must be approved by the Chancellor's office.
6. Regulations for children in Special Education are in effect for Special Education children in temporary housing.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Districts with a "critical mass" of students in temporary housing should plan for expanded educational services which might include:

- o Twelve Month Year
- o Extended school day (with dinner)
- o Smaller class size or adult/child ratio
- o Multi-service room at the school

ROLE OF CENTRAL HEADQUARTERS

1. A Central ombudsman who oversees implementation of the regulation and provides citywide coordination of services
2. Central coordination with City agencies and community-based organizations
3. Approval of District Program Plans
4. Attendance Services
5. Access to Records
6. Food Services
7. Transportation
8. Monitoring

Should you have any questions regarding this regulation, telephone the Office of Ombudsman for Services for Students in Temporary Housing at (718) 935-3773.

NEW YORK STATE LAW PROVIDES...

- a free evaluation of your child to determine if he or she has a disability
- a special education program or services for an eligible child
- free transportation to a special education program

For additional information, please call the New York State Education Department at (518) 474-8917.

200

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EARLY CHILDHOOD DIRECTION CENTERS...

Early Childhood Direction Center
Children's Hospital of Buffalo
936 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14209
(716) 878-7282 or
1-800-462-7653

Regional Early Childhood Direction Center
264 Village Landing
Fairport, NY 14450
or
University of Rochester
Strong Memorial Hospital
601 Elmwood Avenue, Box 671
Rochester, NY 14642
(716) 223-6220 or
1-800-462-4344

Early Childhood Direction Center
200 Huntington Hall - 2nd Floor
Syracuse University
Syracuse, NY 13244-2340
(315) 443-4444, 443-3851, or
1-800-962-5488

Early Childhood Direction Center
Broome-Delaware-Tioga BOCES
421 Upper Glenwood Road
Binghamton, NY 13905-1699
(607) 729-9301 Ext. 421 or 422

Early Childhood Direction Center
Franklin-Essex-Hamilton BOCES
West Main Road
P.O. Box 28
Malone, NY 12953
(518) 483-6523

Early Childhood Direction Center
of the Capital Region
Albany-Schenectady-Schoharie BOCES
Maywood Elementary School
1979 Central Avenue
Albany, NY 12205
(518) 456-9071

Early Childhood Direction Center
25 Webster Street
Kingston, NY 12401
(914) 338-6755

Early Childhood Direction Center
St. Agnes Hospital
305 North Street
White Plains, NY 10605
(914) 681-4656

Early Childhood Direction Center
New York Hospital - N - 507
525 East 68 Street
New York, NY 10021
(212) 746 6175

Early Childhood Direction Center
SUNY at Brooklyn
450 Clarkson Avenue, Box 49
Brooklyn, NY 11203
(718) 245-4081

Early Childhood Direction Center
United Cerebral Palsy of Queens
82-25 164 Street
Jamaica, NY 11432
(718) 380-3000 Ext. 265

Early Childhood Direction Center
Variety Preschooler's Workshop
47 Humphrey Drive
Syosset, NY 11791
(516) 364-8580

Early Childhood Direction Center
Suffolk Child Development Center
27 North Bicycle Path
Selden, NY 11784
(516) 696-2040

Early Childhood Direction Center
Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center
234 East 149 Street, 7B Room 134
Bronx, NY 10451
(212) 579-5778, 579-5779

Early Childhood Direction Center
Staten Island University Hospital
475 Seaview Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10305
(718) 226-6319

Direction Centers are administered by the New York State Education Department. For more information, contact:

New York State Education Department
OECHC - Division of Program Development
Room 1071, Education Building Annex
Albany, NY 12234
(518) 474-5804 or 474-8917

SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR YOUR PRESCHOOL CHILD...

APPENDIX D

If you suspect that your preschool child has a disability you can get help...

The University of the State of New York
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Office for Education of Children with Handicapping Conditions
Albany, New York 12234

201

HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF...

- Is your one-year-old sitting up?
- Is your two-year-old walking?
- Is your three-year-old talking?
- Is your four-year-old getting along with other children?
- Does your child understand when you speak to him?
- Is your child's behavior very hard to manage?

EARLY HELP DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE...

The early years of a child's life are a very important time for learning. Skills develop quickly and form the building blocks for later learning. A child with a disability needs to get help as soon as possible. New York State offers a variety of pre-school special education programs for children below the age of five.

YOU CAN GET HELP...

- For free information about programs and services for children with disabilities from birth to five years, call the Early Childhood Direction Center in your region (please see back of brochure for addresses and phone numbers).
- Your Direction Center can help you find
  - evaluation services for children from birth to five years old
  - infant and preschool programs
  - therapy services
  - medical assistance
  - social services
  - parent groups
- If your child is between three and five years old, call or visit the school district where you are living and ask for the Committee on Preschool Special Education to arrange for an evaluation of your child.
- If your three or four year old child is already in a special education program and you move to another school district call or visit the new district where you are now living and ask for the Committee on Preschool Special Education to arrange for your child's program to continue.